

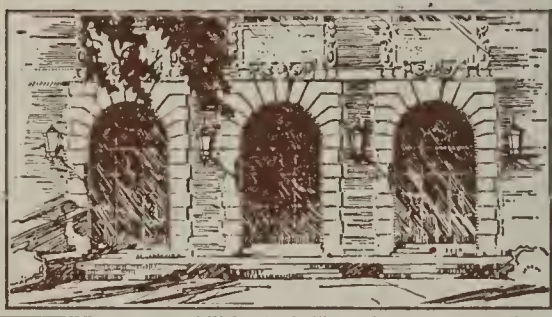
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

241

A 11c

v. 1

cop. 2



The person charging this material is responsible for its return to the library from which it was withdrawn on or before the **Latest Date** stamped below.

Theft, mutilation, and underlining of books are reasons for disciplinary action and may result in dismissal from the University.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LIBRARY AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

DEC 1 5 1977

NOV 2 2 1977

MAR 1 2 1979

MAY 8 1979

NOV 2 9 1980

FEB 2 4 1981

MAR 2 5 1981

SEP 1 5 1982

AUG 3 0 1982

MAR 0 7 1983

MAR

8 1983

DEC 1 2 1984

NOV 3 0 1995

1/2

JAN 1 8 1996

MAY 2 0 1998

MAY 2 0 1998

CONVERSATIONS
WITH
CHILDREN
ON
THE GOSPELS;

CONDUCTED AND EDITED
BY A. BRONSON ALCOTT.

VOLUME I.

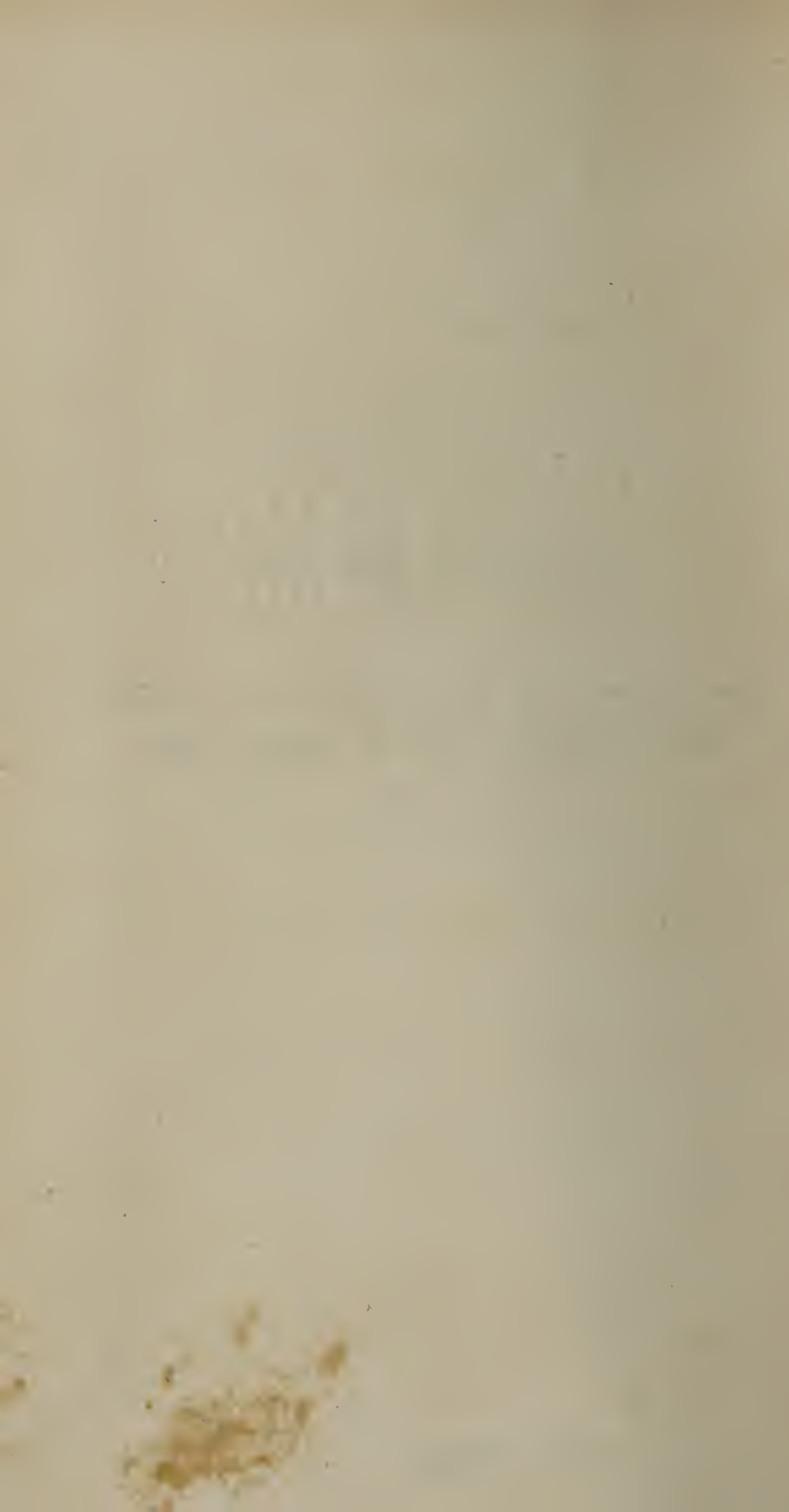
THE LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
1836.

241
A 21c
v. 1
cop 2

ADVERTISEMENT.

This volume will be followed by a second, -
which will appear early in January, 1837.



RECORD
OF
CONVERSATIONS ON THE GOSPELS,
HELD IN
MR. ALCOTT'S SCHOOL;
UNFOLDING
THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE
OF
HUMAN CULTURE.

Except a Man be converted and become as a little Child;—be born again;
—of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see,—nor enter into,—the
kingdom of Heaven.

JESUS OF NAZARETH.

VOLUME I.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY:
1836.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1836,
By A. BRONSON ALCOTT,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

CAMBRIDGE PRESS:
METCALF, TORRY, AND BALLOU.

RECORDER'S PREFACE.

THOSE who are familiar with the "Record of a School" will need no explanation of the following conversations. To those who are not it may be necessary to say, that there is a school in Boston, the object of which is to unfold the natures of children, in the true order of their faculties. The recorder of these conversations, being present at the opening and first discipline of this school, thought the facts that transpired before her eyes worthy of being presented to the world, and hence came the "Record of a School."

It was intimated, in that record, that Mr. Alcott intended to enter upon a course of readings on the New Testament, in which he would pursue a method based on the same principles as guided the lessons on self-inspection, there recorded. These conversations are the result of that intention, and were recorded, because

it was thought that they might prove a model for parents and teachers, who were desirous of giving a spiritual culture to the young; and, also, because Mr. Alcott felt that what the children should freely say, would prove to be a new order of Christian Evidences, by showing the affinity of their natures with that of Jesus. That they have proved to be evidence to many persons who have listened to them; and that some parents and teachers have acknowledged them to be models of the true method of approaching children on these subjects, is a sufficient reason why they should be published.

But, in order to prevent misapprehension, it may be necessary to say, that these conversations are not to be taken as complete representations of Mr. Alcott's views of the subjects introduced; still less are they to be regarded as any intimation of the recorder's; who, though occasionally an interlocutor, was, in general, a passive instrument, and especially when she felt that she differed from Mr. Alcott, on the subject in hand, as was sometimes the case.

It is, however, no part of Mr. Alcott's plan, to impart to the children a system of opinions. His idea is, to give their minds a spiritual direction; and he has perfect confidence that the laws of thought, and of feeling, will bring their unsophisticated natures to such truth as is needful for them. Thus, he sometimes even helps out, by his questions, views which he sees to be struggling in their minds for expression, although he deems them erroneous; for he believes error to involve within itself its own principle of decay, and to need but the Ithuriel touch of expression, to assume its own form, and of itself to fly away from the presence of truth.

Few persons will, perhaps, be able to understand and to sympathize with Mr. Alcott's entire course in this respect; for few do justice to the natural allegiance of the human soul to truth, and good; or appreciate how much more is to be hoped than feared, from giving complete liberty to the yet undepraved and unsophisticated spirit.

But there is another and more important reason, why Mr. Alcott's views are not to be

judged from what is said, or left unsaid, by him, in this record. It is this; that no part of it is so deficient as the part set down to him; the mechanical difficulty of keeping it involved, in both this and the former one, a necessity of sacrificing something. In the "Record of a School," every thing else was sacrificed in order to dwell on the details of the discipline, and to show how such a school could be conducted. In this instance, on the other hand, all details of school discipline are purposely omitted, and the chief object of attention is to give such answers of the children, and such questions of Mr. Alcott, as were immediately connected with them. His statements, illustrations, and personal application of principles, to the peculiarities of the various children, are, therefore, generally omitted. Nor could they be remembered afterwards in their original words; Mr. Alcott finding himself unable to recall them. In some respects, too, his memory was at variance with the particulars of the Record; yet it was determined, on the whole, that the conversations should remain as they appeared to the recorder, who

professes to do full justice but to one idea of Mr. Alcott's, — The method of approaching children on spiritual subjects. This record is the transcript of a Fact, as faithfully given as the circumstances would allow.

A few circumstances will now be stated, to help the imagination and the understanding of the reader to the dramatic effect.

The cut preceding the first conversation shows the position of the children in the school-room, while engaged in conversation. When Mr. Alcott asks a question, those who have answers hold up their hands; he then signifies to the children, successively, that they may speak. Sometimes he gives the sign for but one, sometimes for all, when all or a few reply, according as the answer is more or less general. By this means, time is given to collect their thoughts, and to put these into words, and the recorder is enabled to keep along.

Seven of the children, when the Conversations commenced, (October, 1835,) were between twelve and ten years of age; of these, were

EMMA; SAMUEL R.; CHARLES; WILLIAM B.*;
FRANKLIN; FREDERIC*; EDWARD B.*; *EL-
LEN*; and *ALFRED.*

Eight were between ten and seven years of
age; of these, were

AUGUSTINE; FRANCIS; WILLIAM C.; ANDREW;
WELLES*; GEORGE K.; GEORGE B.; MAR-
THA; LUCY*; LUCIA; JOHN B.*; LEMUEL;
ALEXANDER*; JOSEPH*; SUSAN*; *HERBERT;
*HILLMAN; and *W. AUGUSTUS.

Under the age of seven, were

JOHN D.; EDWARD C.; NATHAN; EDWARD J.;
SAMUEL T.*; HALES; JOSIAH*; FRANK*;
*ELIZABETH; and *CORINNA.†

Thus it will be seen, that Mr. Alcott had to
contend with the disadvantage of a fluctuating
school. Nor was the attendance constant of
those who did remain. Hardly one scholar was
present at every conversation of the course,

† Those to whose names stars are prefixed, entered school
after the conversations commenced; those to whose names stars
are affixed, left school generally during the summer.

a fact that should be taken into consideration in judging of results. A steady class would have done better justice to the plan. If there has been any success, it is reasonable to believe, that, with an animated and persevering coöperation on the part of parents, shown by making some effort, that, at least, there should be no conversation omitted, and that the children should be kept at school, during a whole course, all that Mr. Alcott hopes would have been realized, and the spirit of childhood proved to be identical with Christianity.

It is necessary to add, that, after the Record was nearly completed, Mr. Alcott proposed to the children to review the conversations, in order to ascertain their views of the subjects and passages which had been under their previous consideration. They were pleased with the proposition, and accordingly it was done. The plan was, that, as Mr. Alcott read, those who wanted to say any thing additional, or to suggest any changes of what they had said before, should hold up their hands; and that he himself should occasionally stop, and ask them questions on points that were not suffi-

ciently talked over the first time. Hence came the Notes in the Appendix, to which the reader is referred. By these, he will be able to obtain a clearer idea of the progress of thought in the children. This review closes with the Fifteenth Conversation, as the following ones were much more complete and satisfactory, at first.

Mr. Alcott intends, during the present year, to resume the conversations, beginning at the Sermon on the Mount, with which the third volume of this series will open.

ERRATA.

Page xii of Editor's Preface, line 8, for *though* read *through*.

“ xix “ “ “ 6, “ *ought* “ *ought*.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE work now presented to the reader, forms the introduction to a course of conversations with children, on the Life of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels. It is the Record of an attempt to unfold the Idea of Spirit from the Consciousness of Childhood; and to trace its Intellectual and Corporeal Relations; its Temptations and Disciplines; its Struggles and Conquests, while in the Flesh. To this end, the character of Jesus has been presented to the consideration of children, as the brightest Symbol of Spirit; and they have been encouraged to express their views regarding it. The Conductor of these conversations has reverently explored their consciousness, for the testimony which it might furnish in favor of the truth of Christianity.

Assuming as a fact the spiritual integrity of the young mind, he was desirous of placing under the inspection of children, a character so much in conformity with their own, as that of Jesus of Nazareth. He believed that children would as readily apprehend the divine beauty of this character, when rightly presented, as adults. He even hoped that, though their simple consciousness, the Divine Idea of a Man, as Imaged in Jesus, yet almost lost to the world, might be revived in the mind of adults, who might thus be recalled into the spiritual kingdom. These views, confirmed by long intimacy with the young, as well as by the tendency of his own mind to regard the bright visions of childhood, as the promise of the soul's future blessedness; as the loadstar to conduct it through this terrestrial Life, led him to undertake this enterprise, and to prosecute it with a deep and kindling interest, which he feels will continue unabated to its close.

The Editor will not, meanwhile, conceal the fact, that it is with no little solicitude

that he ventures these documents before the eye of others. He feels that his book should be studied in Simplicity. It is, in no small measure, the production of children. It is a record of their consciousness; a natural history of the undepraved spirit. It is the testimony of unspoiled natures to the spiritual purity of Jesus. It is a revelation of the Divinity in the soul of childhood. Like the Sacred volume — on which it is, indeed, a juvenile commentary — of which it is an interpretation, it cannot be at once, apprehended in all its bearings, and find its true value.

There may be those, however, who, unconscious of its worth, shall avail themselves of the statements, views, and speculations, which it contains, to the detriment of religion and humanity; not perceiving, that it is a work, intended rather to awaken thought; enkindle feeling; and quicken to duty; than to settle opinions, or promulgate sentiments of any kind. Whoever shall find its significance, will scarce treat with disrespect these products of the sacred being of childhood. For childhood

utters sage things, worthy of all note; and he who scoffs at its improvisations, or perverts its simple sayings, proves the corruption of his own being, and his want of reverence for the Good, the Beautiful, the True, and the Holy. He beholds not the Face of the Heavenly Father.

It has been a main purpose of the Conductor of these conversations, to tempt forth, by appropriate questions, the cherished sentiments of the children on the subjects presented to their consideration. It was no part of his intention to bring forward, except by necessary implication, his own favorite opinions as a means of biassing, in the smallest degree, the judgments and decisions of the children. He wished to inculcate only what was the universal product of our common nature. He endeavoured to avoid dogmatizing. He was desirous of gathering the sentiments of the little circle, in which it is his pleasure and privilege to move as teacher and friend. He believed that Christianity was

in Childhood, and he sought the readiest and simplest means to unfold it, and bring it into the light of day.

That he has withheld his own sentiments from the children in all instances, he can scarce hope. It was next to impossible. He has doubtless led them, in some instances, by the tenor of his questions, and his manner of disposing of replies, to the adoption or rejection of sentiments, foreign to their nature. But he believes that he has seldom erred in this way. He preferred to become the simple Analyst of the consciousness of the children, and, having no opinions of his own to establish against their common convictions, he treated with reverence whatever he found within it, deeming it, when spontaneous, a revelation of the same Divinity, as was Jesus.

He is aware that the work which he has assumed is one of great difficulty. He feels that it is not easy to ascertain the precise state of a child's mind. He knows that much of what a child utters has been received from others, that language is an uncertain organ

in his use; that he often endows words with his own significance; that he is liable to mistake the phenomena of his own consciousness; and, moreover, that his scanty vocabulary often leaves him without the means of revealing himself. Still some certainty is attainable. For a child can be trusted when urged to ingenuous expression; and when all temptations to deceive are withdrawn. A wise and sympathizing observer will readily distinguish the real from the assumed; penetrate through all the varying phases of expression, and do him justice.

Yet, while so little is done to guard children against servile imitation, by a wise training of their minds to original thought, we are in danger of not giving them credit for what is their own. So little confidence, indeed, do we place in their statements, and so imitative do we deem them, that, when a wise saying chances to drop from their lips, instead of regarding it, as it of right should be, the product of their own minds, we seek its origin among adults, as if it must of necessity spring from this source alone. We greatly underrate the genius of child-

ren. We do not apprehend the inward power, that but awaits the genial touch, to be quickened into life. The art of tempting this forth we have scarce attained. We have outlived our own simple consciousness, and have thus lost our power of apprehending them. We have yet to learn, that Wisdom and Holiness are of no Age ; that they preëxist, separate from time, and are the possession of Childhood, not less than of later years ; that they, indeed, often appear in fresher features, in the earlier seasons of life, than in physical maturity. In Man they are often quenched by the vulgar aims of the corporeal life.

To a child, all questions touching the Soul are deeply interesting. He loves his own consciousness. It is a charmed world to him. As yet he has not been drawn out of it by the seductions of the propensities ; nor is he beguiled by the illusions of his external senses. And were he assisted in the study and discipline of it, by those who could meet his wants, and on whom he could rely, his spiritual acquirements would keep pace with his years, and he would grow up wise in the mysteries of the

spiritual kingdom. The Divine Idea of a Man, the vision of Self-Perfection, would live in his consciousness; instead of being, as now, pushed aside by the intrusive images, and vulgar claims, of unhallowed appetite and desire. Christ would be formed in the Soul the Hope of Immortality.

In the original copy of this record, the names of the speakers were preserved, as necessary to identify their different views and statements. It is feared that some persons may regret the insertion of these in the printed volume, from a regard to the effect on the speakers themselves. Yet to have used assumed names would have impaired the identity of the record, and have diminished its value, of course, as an historical fact. No serious evils, it is believed, can arise from retaining them. The children expressed themselves in simplicity; there is nothing in their remarks, to flatter their vanity; and they have no desire to see their names in print. The Editor would regret extremely, to be the means of wounding the feelings of those of

his patrons, who have expressed their sympathy with his views, and who, amid much to try their faith in the practicability of his attempt to renovate education, have continued their children under his care. Much less, would he wantonly do ought to injure, in the slightest degree, that simplicity and meekness, which he has sought to cherish in those, for whose spiritual and intellectual culture, these conversations were primarily intended.

The Editor would remark, in conclusion, that he deems his labors valuable, not only to those children, who were present at these conversations, and to the general reader, but he ventures to hope that they will commend themselves, also, to those parents and teachers, who deem the spiritual growth and discipline of those committed to their care, of unspeakable and primary importance. He trusts that he has given, in these specimens of his intercourse with children, a model, not unworthy of imitation, of the simplest and readiest mode of presenting religious truth to the young. He believes that he has

shed some light over the path of Human Culture. He feels, that for children, if not for adults, he has delineated, and in a form which they can apprehend, the Divine Life of Jesus; and has urged upon them, through the mouths of his little ones, considerations and motives, fitted to inspire them with the noble ambition to strive to imitate his Example.

Temple No. 7.

Boston, December, 1836.

CONTENTS.

	Page
INTRODUCTION	xxix

CONVERSATION I.

IDEA OF SPIRIT.

I. EVIDENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

Introduction. — Method. — Sentiment of Spirit. — Metaphysical and Psychological Facts.

1. Testimony of External Senses, — Their Office ; Fruits.
 2. Testimony of Internal Senses, — Their Office ; Intuition of Spirit ;
Analysis of Functions and Offices ; Terms, 1
-

CONVERSATION II.

TESTIMONY OF NATURE AND SCRIPTURE TO SPIRIT.

NATURE AND SCRIPTURE.

II. ANALOGICAL EVIDENCE.

1. Physiological Facts. — Reproduction and Growth ; Light and Shade ; Incubation and Birth ; Budding and Efflorescence ; Fountain and Stream.
2. Psychological Facts. — Birth and Death ; Renovation and Decay ; Sense of Imperfection ; Standard of Perfection in Conscience ; Idea of Absolute and Derivative Being.
3. Historical Facts. — Record of Spirit, or Scripture ; General Preface to the Gospels, from the Sacred Text ; Credibility of Witnesses ; Authenticity of the Gospel Record ; Sum of Results, 11

CONVERSATION III.

REVELATION OF SPIRIT IN NATURE AND HUMANITY.

INSPIRATION.

III. ONTOLOGICAL EVIDENCE.

Divine Genius of St. John the Evangelist. — The Incarnate Word, from the Sacred Text. — Inspiration. — Generation of Nature from Spirit. — Idea of Divinity and Creation. — Inspiration of Humanity. — Animation of Nature. — Inspiration of Scripture. — Idea of Perfect Humanity. — Sense of Human Imperfection. — Difference of Humanity from Divinity. — Likeness of Humanity to Divinity. — Sense of Perfection in Conscience. — Unity of God and Man. — Spiritual Presence. — Filial Union of Man with God. — Incarnation of Divinity. — Limitations of the Flesh. — Self-Perfectibility. — Subject. — Conclusion, 18

CONVERSATION IV.

TESTIMONY OF HUMANITY TO SPIRIT.

INSPIRATION.

IV. PROPHETIC EVIDENCE.

John the Herald of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Reason and Inspiration. — Announcement of Spirit to the Senses. — Descent of Spirit into Humanity. — Idea of Angels; of Pre-Existence; of Prophets and Prophecy. — Intimation of Nature. — Prophetic Faculty. — Prophetic Vision. — Inspiration of Human Reason; of Human Understanding; of Human Will. — Incarnation of Spirit to the Senses. — Inspiration of Conscience. — Filial Union of the Soul with God, 28

CONVERSATION V.

ANNUNCIATION OF SPIRIT TO PATERNITY.

PATERNAL SENTIMENT.

V. EVIDENCE OF PATERNAL SENTIMENT.

Annunciation of John the Baptist. — Vision of Zacharias, from the Sacred Text. — Paternity. — Vision of Paternity. — Consequences of Unbelief. — Obedience. — Emblem of Aspiration. — Theory of Visions. — Festival at Birth. — Idea of Holy Ghost. — Spiritual Culture. — Intuition of Conscience. — Conception of Spirit. — Close, 38

CONVERSATION VI.

ANNUNCIATION OF SPIRIT TO MATERNITY.

CHASTITY.

VI. EVIDENCE OF MATERNAL SENTIMENT.

Vision of Mary, from the Sacred Text. — Maternity. — Purity of Body.
 — Heralds of Genius. — Idea of Dreams. — Integrity of Dreams. —
 Origin of Disease. — Maternal Faith. — Perpetuity of Holiness. —
 Divine Instinct of Human Generation. — Angels of Conception. — Ho-
 liness of Maternity, 47

CONVERSATION VII.

INCARNATION OF SPIRIT.

GESTATION.

VII. EVIDENCE OF MATERNAL SYMPATHY.

Interview between Mary and Elisabeth, from the Sacred Text. — In-
 stinctive Joy. — Divine Instinct of Maternity. — Blessedness of Mater-
 nity. — Humility. — Ecstasy. — Quickening of the Infant Body. —
 Thanksgiving for Maternity. — Anticipation of Maternal Duties, . . . 54

CONVERSATION VIII.

NATIVITY OF SPIRIT.

FAMILY RELATION.

Birth and Naming of John the Baptist, from the Sacred Text. — Ideas
 of Birth-place and Birth. — Birth. — Sacredness of Birth. — Travail
 of Body with Spirit. — Emblems of Birth. — Naming of Spirit Incar-
 nate. — Influence of Nature on Imagination. — Analysis of Zacharias'
 Prophecy. — Emblems of John and Jesus. — Prejudice. — Subject, . . . 60

CONVERSATION IX.

MARRIAGE OF SPIRIT.

CONJUGAL RELATION.

Vision of Joseph, from the Sacred Text. — Idea of Birth. — Constancy.
 Conjugal Love. — Idea of Angels. — Spirit Incarnate. — Emmanuel. —
 Apotheosis of Humanity. — Divinity of Spirit, 67

CONVERSATION X.

ADVENT OF SPIRIT.

INFANCY.

The Birth of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Ideas, Images, and Emblems of Birth. — Theories of Birth. — Release from Evil. — Retribution of Conscience. — Emblem of Retribution. — Spiritual Blessedness. — Maternal Solitude. — Joy at Birth. — Ideas of Paraphrase, 74

CONVERSATION XI.

CONSECRATION OF SPIRIT TO SELF-RENEWAL.

RELIGION.

Description of the Temple. — Consecration in the Temple, from the Sacred Text. — Naming and Blessing. — Pictures of the Consecration. — Self-Control. — Self-Sacrifice. — Emblems. — Inspiration. — Spiritual Triumph. — Temperance. — Self-Renewal. — Spiritual Growth, 86

CONVERSATION XII.

ADORATION OF SPIRIT BY HALLOWED GENIUS.

INFANT HOLINESS.

Review. — Adoration of the Wise Men, from the Sacred Text. — Reverence of Childhood. — Type of the Star. — Star of Holiness. — Dreams, prophetic and retributive. — Vision of Eliphaz. — Treachery. — Astrology. — Astronomy. — Phrenology. — Sovereignty of Holiness. — Joy at Birth. — Adoration of Infant Holiness. — Maternal Love. — Childhood a Type of Holiness, 93

CONVERSATION XIII.

APOSTACY OF SPIRIT.

MALIGNITY.

Review. — Knowledge of the Young Spirit. — Massacre of the Innocents, from the Sacred Text. — Pictures of Cruelty. — Emblems of Herod. — Sense of Retribution. — Punishment. — Prejudice, . . . 104

CONVERSATION XIV.

GENIUS OF SPIRIT.

CHILDHOOD.

Jesus with the Doctors in the Temple, from the Sacred Text. — Wisdom of Childhood. — Idea of Jesus with the Doctors. — Inspiration of Childhood. — General Inspiration. — Genius of Childhood. — Parental Instinct. — Idea of Childhood. — Misapprehension of Childhood, . . . 111

CONVERSATION XV.

INTEGRITY OF SPIRIT.

FILIAL PIETY.

Jesus at Nazareth Fourteen Years, from the Sacred Text. — Maternal Prudence — Filial Love and Obedience — Motives to Obedience. — Authority of Holiness. — Liability to Temptation. — Mission of Life, 121

CONVERSATION XVI.

ORGANIZATION OF SPIRIT.

CORPOREAL RELATIONS.

Genealogy of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Transmission of Life. — Lineage of Spirit. — Era of the Incarnation. — Pre-existence of Spirit. — Eternity of Spirit. — Incarnation of Spirit. — Analogy and Emblem of Human Birth. — Spirit organizes Body. — Organic Law of Temperance. — Violation of Organic Law. — Hereditary Disease. — Longevity of Body. — Laws of Life. — Transfiguration of Spirit. — Laws of Renovation and Decay. — Mutability of Matter. — Transfusion of Spirit. — Review, 127

CONVERSATION XVII.

BAPTISM OF SPIRIT.

TEMPERANCE.

The Ministry of John Baptist from the Sacred Text. — Idea and Emblem of Purification. — Spiritual and Physical Purification. — Mission of

Temperance. -- Repentance. -- Spiritual Life. -- Righteousness. -- Temperance. -- Justice. -- Confession of Sin. -- Pharisees and Saddu- cees. --- Retribution,	139
---	-----

CONVERSATION XVIII.

SPIRITUAL VISION.

BLESSEDNESS.

The Baptism of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. -- Emblem of Inno- cence. -- Emblem of Humility. -- Spiritual Insight. -- Voice of Con- science. -- Ideal Types. -- Idea of Angels. -- Angelic Vision. -- Original Holiness. -- Emblem of Repentance,	149
---	-----

CONVERSATION XIX.

SPIRITUAL SUPREMACY.

SELF-SUBORDINATION.

Review. -- Temptation of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. -- Personality of Evil. -- Origin of Evil. -- Hereditary Evil. -- Appetites. -- Self-Sacri- fice. -- Passions,	157
--	-----

CONVERSATION XX.

SPIRITUAL SUPREMACY.

SELF-CONTROL.

Temptation of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. -- Idea of Temptation. -- Vain Glory. -- Passions. -- Self-Subordination. -- Emblem of Appetite and Passion. -- Spiritual Support. -- Worldly Ambition. -- Spiritual Integrity. -- Aspiration for the Perfect,	166
--	-----

CONVERSATION XXI.

SPIRITUAL REVERENCE.

HUMILITY.

John's Testimony to Jesus, from the Sacred Text. -- Sentiment of Reverence. -- Forerunners. -- Idea and Emblem of Retribution. -- Recognition of Jesus,	174
---	-----

CONVERSATION XXII.

CONCILIATION OF SPIRIT.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

John's Testimony to Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Emblem of Love and Innocence. — Spirit typified in Nature. — Idea and Emblem of Self-Sacrifice. — Purification by Self-Sacrifice. — Excellence. — John's Mission. — Spiritual Experience. — Idea of Absolute and Derivative Being. — Test of Opinions. — Synopsis of the preceding Conversations, 178

APPENDIX, 187

INTRODUCTION.

THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE OF HUMAN CULTURE.

Idea of Man. MAN is the noblest of the Creator's works. He is the most richly gifted of all his creatures. His sphere of action is the broadest; his influence the widest; and to him is given Nature and Life for his heritage and his possession. He holds dominion over the Outward. He is the rightful Sovereign of the Earth, fitted to subdue all things to himself, and to know of no superior, save God. And yet he enters upon the scene of his labors, a feeble and wailing Babe, at first unconscious of the place assigned him, and needs years of tutelage and discipline to fit him for the high and austere duties that await him.

Idea of Education. The Art, which fits such a being to fulfil his high destiny, is the first and noblest of arts. Human Culture is the art of revealing to a man the true Idea of his Being — his endowments —

his possessions — and of fitting him to use these for the growth, renewal, and perfection of his Spirit. It is the art of completing a man. It includes all those influences, and disciplines, by which his faculties are unfolded and perfected. It is that agency which takes the helpless and pleading Infant from the hands of its Creator ; and, apprehending its entire nature, tempts it forth — now by austere, and now by kindly influences and disciplines — and thus moulds it at last into the Image of a Perfect Man ; armed at all points, to use the Body, Nature, and Life, for its growth and renewal, and to hold dominion over the fluctuating things of the Outward. It seeks to realize in the Soul the Image of the Creator. — Its end is a perfect man. Its aim, through every stage of influence and discipline, is self-renewal. The body, nature, and life are its instruments and materials. Jesus is its worthiest Ideal. Christianity its purest Organ. The Gospels its fullest Text-Book. Genius its Inspiration. Holiness its Law. Temperance its Discipline. Immortality its Reward.

History and
Type of this
Idea.

This divine Art, including all others, or subordinating them to its Idea, was never apprehended, in all its breadth and depth of significance, till the era of Jesus of Nazareth. He it was that first revealed it. Over his Divine Intellect first

flitted the Idea of man's endowments and destiny. He set no limits to the growth of our nature. "Be Ye Perfect even as my Father in Heaven is Perfect," was the high aim which he placed before his disciples; and in this he was true to our nature, for the sentiment lives in every faculty and function of our being. It is the ever-sounding Trump of Duty, urging us to the perpetual work of self-renewal. It is the deep instinct of the spirit. And his Life gives us the promise of its realization. In his attributes and endowments he is a Type of our common nature. His achievements are a glimpse of the Apotheosis of Humanity. They are a glorious unfolding of the Godlike in man. They disclose the Idea of Spirit. And if he was not, in himself, the complete fulfilment of Spirit, he apprehended its law, and set forth its conditions. He bequeathed to us the phenomena of its manifestation; for in the Gospels we have the history of Spirit accomplishing its mission on the earth. We behold the Incarnate One, dealing with flesh and blood — tempted, and suffering — yet baffling and overcoming the ministries of Evil and of Pain.

Idea and Type
misapprehended.

Still this Idea, so clearly announced, and so fully demonstrated in the being and life of Jesus, has made but little advance in the minds of men. Men have not subdued it to

themselves. It has not become the ground and law of human consciousness. They have not married their nature to it by a living Faith. Nearly two millenniums have elapsed since its announcement, and yet, so slow of apprehension have been the successors of this Divine Genius, that even at this day, the deep and universal significance of his Idea has not been fully taken in. It has been restricted to himself alone. He stands in the minds of this generation, as a Phenomenon, which God, in the inscrutable designs of his Providence, saw fit to present, to the gaze and wonder of mankind, yet as a being of unsettled rank in the universe, whom men may venture to imitate, but dare not approach. In him, the Human Nature is feebly apprehended, while the Divine is lifted out of sight, and lost in the ineffable light of the Godhead. Men do not deem him as the harmonious unfolding of Spirit into the Image of a Perfect Man — as a worthy Symbol of the Divinity, wherein Human Nature is revealed in its Fulness. Yet, as if by an inward and irresistible Instinct, all men have been drawn to him ; and, while diverse in their opinions ; explaining his Idea in different types, they have given him the full and unre-served homage of their hearts. They have gathered around the altars, inscribed with his perfections, and, through his name, delighted to address the God and

Father of Spirits. Disowning him in their minds, unable to grasp his Idea, they have deified him in their hearts. They have worshipped the Holiness which they could not define.

Era of its
Revival.

It is the mission of this Age, to revive his Idea, give it currency, and reinstate it in the faith of men. By its quickening agency, it is to fructify our common nature, and reproduce its like. It is to unfold our being into the same divine likeness. It is to reproduce Perfect Men. The faded Image of Humanity is to be restored, and man reappear in his original brightness. It is to mould anew our Institutions, our Manners, our Men. It is to restore Nature to its rightful use ; purify Life ; hallow the functions of the Human Body, and regenerate Philosophy, Literature, Art, Society. The Divine Idea of a Man is to be formed in the common consciousness of this age, and genius mould all its products in accordance with it.

Means of its
Revival.

The means for reinstating this Idea in the common mind, in order to conduce to these results, are many. Yet all are simple. And the most direct and effectual are by apprehending the Genius of this Divine Man, from the study of those Records wherein his career is delineated with so much

fidelity, simplicity, and truth. Therein have we a manifestation of Spirit, while undergoing the temptations of this corporeal life ; yet faithful to the laws of its renovation and its end. The Divine Idea of Humanity gleams forth through every circumstance of his terrestrial career. The fearful agencies of the Spirit assert their power. In him Nature and Life are subordinated to the spiritual force. The Son of God appears on Earth, enrobed in Flesh, and looks forth serenely upon Man. We feel the significance of the Incarnation ; the grandeur of our nature. We associate Jesus with our holiest aspirations, our deepest affections ; and thus does he become a fit Mediator between the last age and the new era, of which he was the herald and the pledge. He is to us the Prophet of two millenniums. He is the brightest Symbol of a Man that history affords, and points us to yet fuller manifestations of the Godhead.

Ideal of a
Teacher.

And the Gospels are not only a fit Text-Book for the study of Spirit, in its corporeal relations, but they are a specimen also of the true method of imparting instruction. They give us the practice of Jesus himself. They unfold the means of addressing human nature. Jesus was a Teacher ; he sought to renovate Humanity. His method commends itself to us. It is a beautiful

exhibition of his Genius, bearing the stamp of naturalness, force, and directness. It is popular. Instead of seeking formal and austere means, he rested his influence chiefly on the living word, rising spontaneously in the soul, and clothing itself at once, in the simplest, yet most commanding forms. He was a finished extemporaneous speaker. His manner and style are models. In these, his Ideas became like the beautiful, yet majestic Nature, whose images he wove so skilfully into his diction. He was an Artist of the highest order. More perfect specimens of address do not elsewhere exist. View him in his conversation with his disciples. Hear him in his simple colloquies with the people. Listen to him when seated at the well-side discoursing with the Samaritan woman, on the IDEA OF WORSHIP; and at night with Nicodemus, on SPIRITUAL RENEWAL. From facts and objects the most familiar, he slid easily and simply into the highest and holiest themes, and, in this unimposing guise, disclosed the great Doctrines, and stated the Divine Ideas, that it was his mission to bequeath to his race. Conversation was the form of utterance that he sought. Of formal discourse but one specimen is given, in his Sermon on the Mount; yet in this the inspiration bursts all forms, and he rises to the highest efforts of genius, at its close.

Organ of
Instruction

This preference of Jesus for Conversation, as the fittest organ of utterance, is a striking proof of his comprehensive Idea of Education. He knew what was in man, and the means of perfecting his being. He saw the superiority of this exercise over others for quickening the Spirit. For, in this all the instincts and faculties of our being are touched. They find full and fair scope. It tempts forth all the powers. Man faces his fellow man. He holds a living intercourse. He feels the quickening life and light. The social affections are addressed ; and these bring all the faculties in train. Speech comes unbidden. Nature lends her images. Imagination sends abroad her winged words. We see thought as it springs from the soul, and in the very process of growth and utterance. Reason plays under the mellow light of fancy. The Genius of the Soul is waked, and eloquence sits on her tuneful lip. Wisdom finds an organ worthy her serene, yet imposing products. Ideas stand in beauty and majesty before the Soul.

Organ of
Genius.

And Genius has ever sought this organ of utterance. It has given us full testimony in its favor. Socrates — a name that Christians can see coupled with that of their Divine Sage — descanted thus on the profound themes in which he delighted. The market-place ; the workshop ; the public streets were

his favorite haunts of instruction. And the divine Plato has added his testimony, also, in those enduring works, wherein he sought to embalm for posterity, both the wisdom of his master and the genius that was his own. Rich text-books these for the study of philosophic genius. They rank next in finish and beauty, to the specimens of Jesus as recorded by his own beloved John.

Genius alone
Renews.

It is by such organs that Human Nature is to be unfolded into the Idea of its fulness. Yet to do this, teachers must be men in possession of their Idea. They must be men of their kind; men inspired with great and living Ideas, as was Jesus. Such alone are worthy. They alone can pierce the customs and conventions that hide the Soul from itself. They alone can release it from the slavery of the corporeal life, and give it back to itself. And such are ever sent at the call of Humanity. Some God, instinct with the Idea that is to regenerate his era, is ever vouchsafed. As a flaming Herald he appears in his time, and sends abroad the Idea which it is the mission of the age to organize in institutions, and quicken into manners. Such mould the Genius of the time. They revive in Humanity the lost idea of its destiny, and reveal its fearful endowments. They vindicate the divinity of

man's nature, and foreshadow on the coming Time the conquests that await it. An Age preëxists in them ; and History is but the manifestation and issue of their Wisdom and Will. They are the Prophets of the Future.

Genius mis-
apprehended.

At this day, men need some revelation of Genius, to arouse them to a sense of their nature ; for the Divine Idea of a Man seems to have died out of our consciousness. Encumbered by the gluts of the appetites, sunk in the corporeal senses, men know not the divine life that stirs within them, yet hidden and enchained. They revere not their own nature. And when the phenomenon of Genius appears, they marvel at its advent. They cannot own it. Laden with the gifts of the Divinity it touches their orb. At intervals of a century it appears. Some Nature, struggling with vicissitude, tempts forth the Idea of Spirit from within, and unlooses the Promethean God to roam free over the earth. He possesses his Idea and brings it as a blessed gift to his race. With awe-struck visage, the tribes of semi-unfolded beings survey it from below, deeming it a partial or preternatural gift of the Divinity, into whose life and being they are forbidden, by a decree of the Eternal, from entering ; whose law they must obey, yet cannot apprehend.

They dream not, that this phenomenon is but the complement of their common nature ; and that in this admiration and obedience, which they proffer, is both the promise and the pledge of the same powers in themselves ; that this is but their fellow-creature in the flesh. And thus the mystery remains sealed, till at last it is revealed, that this is but the unfolding of human nature in its fulness ; working free of every incumbrance, by possessing itself.

Idea of
Genius.

(For Genius is but the free and harmonious play of all the faculties of a human being.) It is a Man possessing his Idea and working with it. It is the Whole Man — the central Will — working worthily, subordinating all else to itself ; and reaching its end by the simplest and readiest means. It is human nature rising superior to things and events, and transfiguring these into the image of its own Spiritual Ideal. It is the Spirit working in its own way, through its own organs and instruments, and on its own materials. It is the Inspiration of all the faculties of a Man by a life conformed to his Idea. It is not indebted to others for its manifestation. It draws its life from within. It is self-subsistent. It feeds on Holiness ; lives in the open vision of Truth ; enrobes itself in the light of Beauty ; and bathes its powers in the fount of Temperance. It aspires after the

Perfect. It loves Freedom. It dwells in Unity. All men have it, yet it does not appear in all men. It is obscured by ignorance; quenched by evil; discipline does not reach it; nor opportunity cherish it. Yet there it is — an original, indestructible element of every spirit; and sooner or later, in this corporeal, or in the spiritual era — at some period of the Soul's developement — it shall be tempted forth, and assert its claims in the life of the Spirit. It is the province of education to wake it, and discipline it into the perfection which is its end, and for which it ever thirsts. Yet Genius alone can wake it. Genius alone inspire it. It comes not at the incantation of mere talent. It respects itself. It is strange to all save its kind. It shrinks from vulgar gaze, and lives in its own world. None but the eye of Genius can discern it, and it obeys the call of none else.

Wane of
Genius.

Yet among us Genius is at its wane. Human Nature appears shorn of her beams. We estimate man too low to hope for bright manifestations. And our views create the imperfection that mocks us. We have neither great men, nor good institutions. Genius visits us but seldom. The results of our culture are slender. Thirsting for life and light, Genius is blessed with neither. It cannot free itself from the in-

cumbrance that it inherits. The Idea of a Man does not shine upon it from any external Image. Such Corporeal Types it seeks in vain. It cries for instruction, and none satisfies its wants. There is little genius in our schoolrooms. Those who enter yearly upon the stage of life, bearing the impress of our choicest culture, and most watchful discipline, are often unworthy specimens of our nature. Holiness attends not their steps. Genius adorns not their brow. Many a parent among us — having lavished upon his child his best affections, and spared no pains which money and solicitude could supply, to command the best influences within his reach — sees him return, destitute of that high principle, and those simple aims, that alone ennoble human nature, and satisfy the parental heart. Or, should the child return with his young simplicity and truth, yet how unarmed is his intellect with the quiver of genius, to achieve a worthy name, and bless his race. The Soul is spilt out in lust; buried in appetite; or wasted in vulgar toils; and retreats, at last, ignobly from the scene of life's temptations; despoiled of its innocence; bereft of its hopes, and sets in the dark night of disquietude, lost to the race.

Cause of
Declension.

Yet not all depravity nor ignorance is to be laid at the door of our Institutions.

The evil has two faces. It is deeper in its origin. It springs from our low estimate of human nature, and consequent want of reverence and regard for it. It is to be divided between parents and institutions. The young but too often enter our institutions of learning, despoiled of their virtue, and are of course disabled from running an honorable intellectual career. Our systems of nursery discipline are built on shallow or false principles; the young repeat the vices and reproduce the opinions of parents; and parents have little cause to complain. They cannot expect fruits of institutions, for which they have taken so little pains to sow the seeds. They reap as they sow. Aiming at little they attain but little. They cast their own horoscope, and determine by their aim the fate of the coming generation. They are the organized Opportunity of their era.

Faith of
Genius.

To work worthily, man must aspire worthily. His theory of human attainment must be lofty. It must ever be lifting him above the low plain of custom and convention, in which the senses confine him, into the high mount of vision, and of renovating ideas. To a divine nature, the sun ever rises over the mountains of hope, and brings promises on its wings; nor does he linger around the dark and depressing valley of distrust and

of fear. The magnificent bow of promise ever gilds his purpose, and he pursues his way steadily, and in faith to the end. For Faith is the soul of all improvement. It is the Will of an Idea. It is an Idea seeking to embody and reproduce itself. It is the All-Proceeding Word going forth, as in the beginning of things, to incarnate itself, and become flesh and blood to the senses. Without this faith an Idea works no good. It is this which animates and quickens it into life. And this must come from living men.

Genius alone
Inspires.

And such Faith is the possession of all who apprehend Ideas. Such faith had Jesus, and this it was that empowered him to do the mighty works of which we read. It was this which inspired his genius. And Genius alone can inspire others. To nurse the young spirit as it puts forth its pinions in the fair and hopeful morning of life, it must be placed under the kindly and sympathising agency of Genius — heaven-inspired and hallowed — or there is no certainty that its aspirations will not die away in the routine of formal tuition, or spend themselves in the animal propensities that coexist with it. [Teachers must be men of genius.] They must be men inspired. The Divine Idea of a Man must have been unfolded from their being, and be a living presence. Philosophers, and Sages, and Seers,

— the only real men — must come as of old, to the holy vocation of unfolding human nature. Socrates, and Plato, and the Diviner Jesus, must be raised up to us, to breathe their wisdom and will into the genius of our era, to recast our institutions, remould our manners, and regenerate our men. Philosophy and Religion, descending from the regions of cloudy speculation, must thus become denizens of our common earth, known among us as friends, and uttering their saving truths through the mouths of our little ones. Thus shall our being be unfolded. Thus the Idea of a man be reinstated in our consciousness. Thus Jesus be honored among us. And thus shall Man grow up, as the tree of the primeval woods, luxuriant, vigorous — armed at all points, to brave the winds and the storms of the finite and the mutable — bearing his Fruit in due season.

Idea of Inspiration.

To fulfil its end, Instruction must be an Inspiration. The true Teacher, like Jesus, must inspire in order to unfold. He must know that instruction is something more than mere impression on the understanding. He must feel it to be a kindling influence; that, in himself alone, is the quickening, informing energy; that the life and growth of his charge preëxist in him. He is to hallow and refine as he tempts forth the soul. He is

to inform the understanding, by chastening the appetites, allaying the passions, softening the affections, vivifying the imagination, illuminating the reason, giving pliancy and force to the will; for a true understanding is the issue of these powers, working freely and in harmony with the Genius of the soul, conformed to the law of Duty. He is to put all the springs of Being in motion. And to do this, he must be the personation and exemplar of what he would unfold in his charge. Wisdom, Truth, Holiness, must have preëxistence in him, or they will not appear in his pupils. These influence alone in the concrete. They must be made flesh and blood in him, to reappear to the senses, and reproduce their like. — And thus shall his Genius subordinate all to its own force. Thus shall all be constrained to yield to its influence; and this too, without violating any Law, spiritual, intellectual, corporeal — but in obedience to the highest Agency, co-working with God. Under the melting force of his Genius, thus employed, Mind shall become fluid, and he shall mould it into Types of Heavenly Beauty. His agency is that of mind leaping to meet mind; not of force acting on opposing force. The Soul is touched by the live coal of his lips. A kindling influence goes forth to inspire; making the mind think; the heart feel; the pulse throb with his own. He arouses every faculty.

He awakens the Godlike. He images the fair and full features of a Man. And thus doth he drive at will the drowsy Brute, that the Eternal hath yoked to the chariot of Life, to urge man across the Finite !

Hallowed
Genius.

To work worthily in the ministry of Instruction, requires not only the highest Gifts, but that these should be refined by Holiness. This is the condition of spiritual and intellectual clearness. This alone unfolds Genius, and puts Nature and Life to their fit uses. "If any man will know of the Doctrine, let him do the will of my Father," said Jesus ; and he, who does not yield this obedience, shall never shine forth in the true and full glory of his nature.

Quenching of
Genius.

Yet this truth seems to have been lost sight of in our measures of Human Culture. We incumber the body by the gluts of the appetites ; dim the senses by self-indulgence ; abuse nature and life in all manner of ways, and yet dream of unfolding Genius amidst all these diverse agencies and influences. We train Children amidst all these evils. We surround them by temptations, which stagger their feeble virtue, and they fall too easily into the snare which we have spread. Concupiscence defiles their functions ; blunts the edge

of their faculties ; obstructs the passages of the soul to the outward, and blocks it up. The human body, the soul's implement for acting on Nature, in the ministry of life, is thus depraved ; and the soul falls an easy prey to the Tempter. Self-Indulgence too soon rings the knell of the spiritual life, as the omen of its interment in the flesh. It wastes the corporeal functions ; mars the Divine Image in the human form ; estranges the affections ; paralyzes the will ; clouds the intellect ; dims the fire of genius ; seals conscience, and corrupts the whole being. Lusts entrench themselves in the Soul ; unclean spirits and demons nestle therein. Self-subjection, self-sacrifice, self-renewal are not made its habitual exercises, and it becomes the vassal of the Body. The Idea of Spirit dies out of the Consciousness ; and Man is shorn of his glories. Nature grows over him. He mistakes Images for Ideas, and thus becomes an Idolater. He deserts the Sanctuary of the Indwelling Spirit, and worships at the throne of the Outward.

Means of
Reform.

Our plans of influence, to be successful, must become more practical. We must be more faithful. We must deal less in abstractions ; depend less on precepts and rules. We must fit the soul for duty by the practice of duty. We must watch and enforce. Like unsleeping Providence, we

must accompany the young into the scenes of temptation and trial, and aid them in the needful hour. Duty must sally forth an attending Presence into the work-day world, and organize to itself a living body. It must learn the art of uses. It must incorporate itself with Nature. To its sentiments we must give a Heart. Its Ideas we must arm with Hands. For it ever longs to become flesh and blood. The Son of God delights to take the Son of Man as a co-mate, and to bring flesh and blood even to the very gates of the Spiritual Kingdom. It would make the word Flesh, that it shall be seen and handled and felt.

Spiritual
Culture.

The Culture, that is alone worthy of Man, and which unfolds his Being into the Image of its fulness, casts its agencies over all things. It uses Nature and Life as means for the Soul's growth and renewal. It never deserts its charge, but follows it into all the relations of Duty; at the table it seats itself, and fills the cup for the Soul; caters for it; decides when it has enough; and heeds not the clamor of appetite and desire. It lifts the body from the drowsy couch; opens the eyes upon the rising sun; tempts it forth to breathe the invigorating air; plunges it into the purifying bath; and thus whets all its functions for the duties of the coming day. And when toil and amusement have

brought weariness over it, and the drowsed senses claim rest and renewal, it remands it to the restoring couch again, to feed it on dreams. Nor does it desert the Soul in seasons of labor, of amusement, of study. To the place of occupation it attends it, guides the corporeal members with skill and faithfulness; prompts the mind to diligence; the heart to gentleness and love; directs to the virtuous associate; the pure place of recreation; the innocent pastime. It protects the eye from the foul image; the vicious act; the ear from the vulgar or profane word; the hand from theft; the tongue from guile;—urges to cheerfulness and purity; to forbearance and meekness; to self-subjection and self-sacrifice; order and decorum; and points, amid all the relations of duty, to the Law of Temperance, of Genius, of Holiness, which God hath established in the depths of the Spirit, and guarded by the unsleeping sentinel of Conscience, from violation and defilement. It renews the Soul day by day.

Self-Apprehension.

Man's mission is to subdue Nature; to hold dominion over his own Body; and use both these, and the ministries of Life, for the growth, renewal, and perfection of his Being. As did Jesus, he must overcome the World, by passing through its temptations, and vanquishing the Tempter.

But before he shall attain this mastery he must apprehend himself. In his Nature is wrapt up the problem of all Power reduced to a simple unity. The knowledge of his own being includes, in its endless circuit, the Alphabet of all else. It is a Universe, wherein all else is imaged. God — Nature — are the extremes, of which he is the middle term, and through his Being flow these mighty Forces, if, perchance, he shall stay them as they pass over his Consciousness, apprehend their significance — their use — and then conforming his being to the one; he shall again conform the other to himself.

Childhood a
Type of the
Godhead.

Yet, dimmed as is the Divine Image in Man, it reflects not the full and fair Image of the Godhead. We seek it alone in Jesus in its fulness; yet sigh to behold it with our corporeal senses. And this privilege God ever vouchsafes to the pure and undefiled in heart; for he ever sends it upon the earth in the form of the Child. Herein have we a Type of the Divinity. Herein is our Nature yet despoiled of none of its glory. In flesh and blood he reveals his Presence to our senses, and pleads with us to worship and revere.

Misapprehension
of Childhood.

Yet few there are who apprehend the significance of the Divine Type. Child-

hood is yet a problem that we have scarce studied. It has been and still is a mystery to us. Its pure and simple nature; its faith and its hope, are all unknown to us. It stands friendless and alone, pleading in vain for sympathy and aid. And, though wronged and slighted, it still retains its trustingness, still does it cling to the Adult for renovation and light. — But thus shall it not be always. It shall be apprehended. It shall not be a mystery and made to offend. “Light is springing up, and the day-spring from on high is again visiting us.” And, as in times sacred to our associations, the Star led the Wise Men to the Infant Jesus, to present their reverent gifts, and was, at once, both the herald and the pledge of the advent of the Son of God on the earth; even so is the hour approaching, and it lingers not on its errand, when the Wise and the Gifted, shall again surround the cradles of the New Born Babe, and there proffer, as did the Magi, their gifts of reverence and of love to the Holiness that hath visited the earth, and shines forth with a celestial glory around their heads; — and these, pondering well, as did Mary, the Divine Significance, shall steal from it the Art — so long lost in our Consciousness — of unfolding its powers into the fulness of the God.

Renovation of
Nature.

And thus Man, repossessing his Idea, shall conform Nature to himself. Institutions shall bear the fruits of his regenerate being. They shall flourish in vigor and beauty. They shall circulate his Genius through Nature and Life, and repeat the story of his renewal.

Human
Renewal.

Say not that this Era is distant. Verily, it is near. Even at this moment, the heralds of the time are announcing its approach. Omens of Good hover over us. A deeper and holier Faith is quickening the Genius of our Time. Humanity awaits the hour of its renewal. The renovating Fiat has gone forth, to revive our Institutions, and remould our Men. Faith is lifting her voice, and, like Jesus near the Tomb of Lazarus, is uttering the living words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, and he that Believeth, though dead in doubts and sins, shall be reassured of his Immortality, and shall flourish in unfading Youth! I will mould Nature and Man according to my Will. I will transfigure all things into the Image of my Ideal." — And by such Faith, and such Vision, shall Education work its mission on the Earth. Apprehending the Divine Significance of Jesus — yet filled with the assurance of coming Messiahs to meet the growing nature of Man — shall inspired Genius go forth to

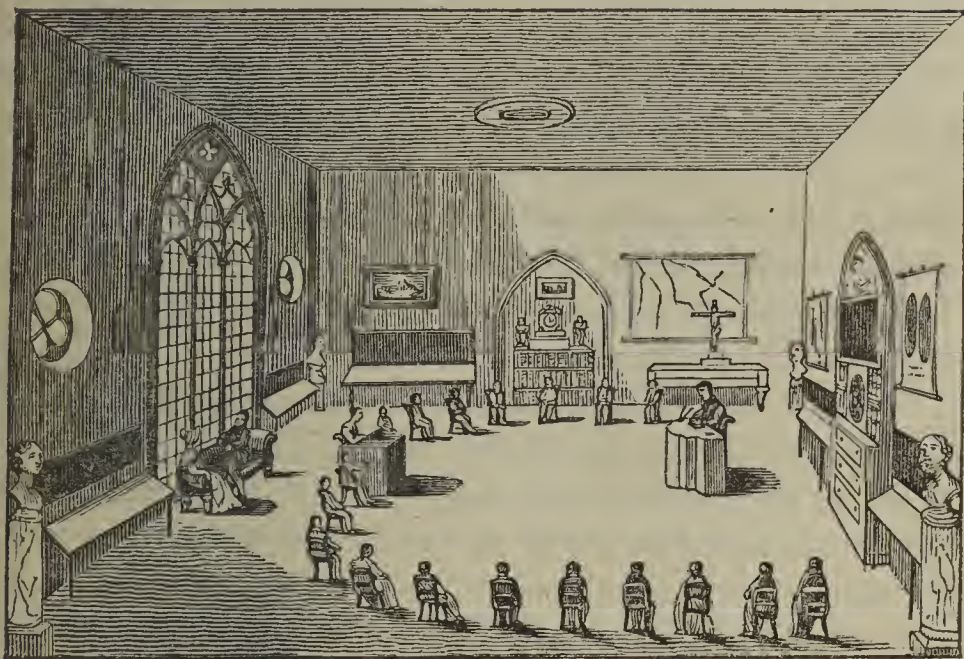
reöovate his Era ; casting out the unclean spirits and the demons that yet afflict the Soul. And then shall Humanity, leaving her infirmities, her wrongs, her sufferings, and her sins, in the corrupting grave, reappear in the consciousness of Physical Purity ; Inspired Genius ; and Spotless Holiness. Men shall be one with God, as was the Man of Nazareth.

CONVERSATIONS.

RECORD

OF

CONVERSATIONS ON THE GOSPELS.



View of Mr. Alcott and the Children conversing.

CONVERSATION I.

IDEA OF SPIRIT.

EVIDENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

Introduction. — Method. — Sentiment of Spirit.

I. METAPHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTS.

1. Testimony of External Senses, — Their Office ; Fruits.
2. Testimony of Internal Senses, — Their Office ; Intuition of Spirit ; Analysis of Functions and Offices ; Terms.

Introduction. **MR. ALCOTT.** We are now going to speak of the Life of Christ. If any of you are interested to understand how Jesus came into this world ; and lived ; and acted ; and went back to God ;

and will try to give me your whole attention, and not let your minds wander, you may hold up your hands.

(Many did so.)

Some of you, most of you, will sometimes let your thoughts wander ; but you will all try, I hope, to keep them as steady as possible ; for only by doing so, can we have interesting conversations. The best thoughts do not lie on the surface of our minds. We have to dive under for them, like pearl fishers. This morning I am going to ask some questions, that I may prove to you, by your own answers to them, that you are all, every one of you, capable of thinking on this subject ; and of having thoughts come from your minds, which will interest all, — teaching yourselves to know yourselves, and teaching me.

Method. We are going, all of us, to study the life of Jesus, the Christ. As often as it is studied, it is better understood, and suggests new thoughts. I do not know all I am going to say, for I shall have new thoughts, that I never had before. Still less do you know all you are going to say ; for you have not thought so much of the subject as I have. But if we will all think, and all say what we think, not repeating the words and thoughts of others, we shall teach each other.

CHARLES. But sometimes several of us will have the same thought, of ourselves.

MR. ALCOTT. Then you can say so, and there will be no repetition.

Record. The Recorder then said, that she was going to keep a record of the conversations, not of the same kind as before, when she was making a picture of the school ; but, in the first place, to preserve Mr. Alcott's thoughts, as far as they were expressed ; and, in the second place, to preserve their thoughts, when they seemed sincere. (See Note 1, in the Appendix.)

(All expressed great pleasure in the coming lessons, — were very ready to promise attention ; and seemed perfectly to understand what was meant by sincere conversation.)

MR. ALCOTT. Now, when I ask a question, each one may think of an answer to it, and as soon as he has one, hold up his hand. I shall then ask any one I please to speak ; perhaps I shall ask every one to give an answer to some of my questions, so that I may compare your answers. Let no one speak without I ask him, but only hold up his hand.

(After a pause, during which there was a profound silence of expectation on the part of the children ;)

Mr. Alcott asked ; Have you a clear feeling, idea, of something, which is not your body, which you never saw, but which is, — which loves, which thinks, which feels?

(All gradually held up their hands.)

Now what are your proofs ?

(Many hands fell.)

Those who have proofs may answer in turn.

Metaphysical and
Psychological
Evidence.

LEMUEL. I am sure of it, but I do not know why.

ALEXANDER. I have heard *you* say so.

MR. ALCOTT. You have trusted to me? Well! that is faith in testimony.

WILLIAM C. I cannot prove it, but I feel it.

MR. ALCOTT. You and Lemuel have the evidence of consciousness. You cannot think otherwise.

GEORGE K. I thought of my mind as my proof.

ANDREW. I thought of my conscience ; when I do right I feel that I have one.

WILLIAM B. I thought and I felt. That is Spirit.

CHARLES. I felt your question working within me, and that was my proof.

EDWARD B. Conscience is my proof. I feel when I do right and wrong, and that is my soul.

LUCY. I have proof, but I cannot express it.

EMMA. I knew before I was asked.

MR. ALCOTT. It is a sentiment with you and Lucy.

JOSIAH. Self-government.*

EDWARD J. Conscience.

(Some other answers were repetitious.)

* The reader may be struck with the fact of a child of six years of age giving *self-government*, as a proof of the existence of spirit independent of matter.

This boy undoubtedly owes much to nature, but the measure cannot easily be determined, because his education, thus far, had been admirable. I refer to the training of the *mind* and *moral nature*, and to nothing more outward; for he was not so much advanced as many others in the mechanical faculty of reading and writing; he was backward in arithmetic, and in those things in which there is often a very deceptive precocity; and, in general, he evinced no extraordinary ardor to acquire. He had always been exclusively under the instruction of his mother, whose principles and methods, as far as Mr. Alcott has been able to discover, were singularly in unison with his own. His eye had been educated by pictures; his mind cultivated by self-inspection, and conscientious stimulus, and his taste for beauty met and sympathised with. His mother had read to him a great deal, and taught him the use of words by conversation with herself, in which he peculiarly delighted, but which he could not enjoy much, except with the grown up and the gentle, on account of a natural impediment in his speech. It is also worthy of remark, that the only books, which he had ever been induced to read by himself, were Gallaudet's Books of the Soul, in which, in fact, he learned to read. He had, however, in his memory a good deal of poetry, learned by rote, and he was in the habit of dictating, himself, a sort of measured, unrhymed composition which he called poetry, the subject of which was generally the beauty of nature, and which always expressed religious feeling. REC.

MR. ALCOTT. So you all think there is something, which is not body.

Testimony of
the External
Senses. But have you seen it; who has seen conscience?
(*All made the negative sign.*)

Then your eyes, it seems, did not tell you of this being, which is not body.

(*All shook their heads.*)

Nor your ears?

GEORGE K. I have heard my father and mother talk about conscience with my ears, and so I believed it was.*

* This child had been in the school a year, without often speaking. Evidently unused to having his intellect addressed, he had only been remarkable for his faithfulness, and the expression of sentiment, that glowed in his face, whenever an interesting subject was under discussion. He was always very attentive, yet when Mr. Alcott asked him a question that required words in answer, all his soul flew into his face, but he was dumb; and Mr. Alcott would generally say, well, it is no matter, I see how you feel; to which the child would reply, with a look of gratitude. It was evident that his mind was not idle; for he constantly seemed full of attention, and intelligence, and he always expressed himself by a silent vote, when a question was to be answered by raising the hand. From this day, in which his tongue was for the first time loosed, he became one of our most ready speakers, and in some departments of thought was always remarkably lucid.

I have been thus particular, because I think that, in this instance, Mr. Alcott's sagacity is strikingly proved, and his example of patient waiting is worthy of consideration. If George's parents had felt the uneasy ambition of seeing immediate effects produced; and thus lost their confidence in Mr. Alcott, as many others have done, because he would not force a mind, whose progress was real in its own way; he would not have come the second year, but have carried into another school the flower of the seed Mr. Alcott had planted; — a thing which has not unfrequently been done, as Mr. Alcott has painfully felt. REC.

MR. ALCOTT. What believed ? your ears ? or was it the conscience within you that understood what your father and mother meant by conscience ?

GEORGE K. Yes, that was the way. But our ears do a little good.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes, the spirit uses the organs of sense, though it is something else than these organs. (See Note 2.)

EDWARD B. It only *seems* as if our senses themselves saw, and heard, and smelled ; but it is the mind which is really doing those things with the eyes and ears for its instruments. (See Note 3.)

MR. ALCOTT. Now in all this, what are your senses after ? What is it, that this something within you wants, when it uses your eyes, ears, and other organs of sense ; what does it go out after ?

Office of the Ex-
ternal Senses.

JOHN D. When we use our tongue, the spirit goes after our food.

LEMUEL. When we look, it wants something to see ; and when we listen, it wants something to hear ; and when we taste, it wants something to eat and drink.

ALEXANDER. When we look, the spirit comes to help.

WELLES. When we hear, the spirit is after instruction.

CHARLES. The senses are a kind of feelers, to show forth what the spirit within wants. (See Note 4.)

MR. ALCOTT. When you see an infant, you observe that its little body is full of motion. It seems to be constantly seeking after something. Do you think the spirit within it feels, and tries to express its feelings and wants through the senses ?

CHARLES assented.

EMMA. The spirit goes out through the senses after outward things.

MR. ALCOTT. After what outward things ?

(*Emma did not answer.*)

MR. ALCOTT. Josiah, what is your answer ?

JOSIAH. *My mind sees through my eyes.*

EDWARD J. The spirit comes out to see and hear.

HALES. *My mind sees with my eyes.*

JOSEPH. The senses are to help keep the mind good and the body good.*

MR. ALCOTT. Do they always keep all good ?

JOSEPH. When we let them.

MR. ALCOTT. What hinders them sometimes ?

JOSEPH. Anger.

MR. ALCOTT. What lets them make us good at other times ?

JOSEPH. Love. (See Note 5.)

JOHN D. When a baby goes into his mind to feel, he feels after wisdom and goodness.

MR. ALCOTT. The infant goes inward, then, for wisdom and goodness ; and outward for food for the body, and for knowledge ?

ANDREW. When we have done right, the spirit comes out in our eyes ; and when we have done wrong, it comes out and makes us ashamed to show our face. (See Note 6.)

WILLIAM B. The senses are made so that your spirit, and soul, and mind, may get knowledge, and be kept alive ; for if you had no senses you could not be very wise ; and you need the senses to communicate to others, what you gain from the use of your senses.

* This child is deaf. His seat was always close by Mr. Alcott, and he fixed his eyes always on Mr. Alcott's lips, and then would follow his eye to the speaker among the children. Sometimes Mr. Alcott would tell him what the children said. His remarks are very characteristic throughout. REC.

MR. ALCOTT. Where does life come from, William ?

WILLIAM B. From the spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Your answer implies that life comes from without, through the senses ; for you speak of the spirit's being kept alive by them, as if there was something that came from objects of sense to keep it alive.

WILLIAM B. Oh, I do not mean that ; I mean that one person, by means of the senses, is able to keep alive the spirit of others.

Fruits of the
Senses.

EDWARD B. I think the spirit goes into the eyes, ears, &c. after knowledge. But I think the soul would have some wisdom, even if we had no senses at all, — were blind, deaf, and all. (See Note 7.)

WILLIAM B. I think people who had no senses might be good, but could not be very wise.

MR. ALCOTT. What is wisdom ?

(*A pause.*)

Does not wisdom stand for all that the spirit gets from itself ? The senses gain knowledge of outward things ; the spirit feels, judges of, disposes, uses, this knowledge, and makes it an instrument, and this is wisdom, is it not ? Is not this the distinction ?

EDWARD B. A person who has great knowledge has greater means, sometimes, of being bad and unwise.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you remember the two trees in Paradise ? the tree of knowledge and the tree of life — of wisdom perhaps ?

Testimony of the
Internal Senses.

LUCY. We ought to have some senses to tell us when we do right, and how.

LUCIA. There are senses in the spirit for that !

MR. ALCOTT. What other senses have we but the body's senses ; what are the names of the spirit's senses ?

GEORGE K. The mind has senses, which it puts into the body's senses.

MR. ALCOTT. Has the mind any other senses than those which it puts into the body's five senses ?

GEORGE K. Yes ; a sense of good.

MR. ALCOTT. Has the mind a sense about right and wrong ?

SEVERAL. Yes ; conscience.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you have this inward, this spiritual sense of right and wrong ?

(*A pause.*) (See Note 8.)

MR. ALCOTT. Yesterday one of the boys behaved wrong and was punished. When he came into school, yesterday morning, his eyes looked large and bright. When he comes into school to-day, his eyes are half shut ; why is this ?

SEVERAL. Conscience.

THE REST. The spirit's senses.

WELLES. Shame is one of the spirit's senses. (See Note 9.)

MR. ALCOTT. The boy I have been speaking of may rise and show himself.

(*Several rose.*)

Well ! I thought of one ; but conscience, it seems, has thought of many more.

LUCY and others exclaimed. The spirit's senses.

MR. ALCOTT. Such of you then, as think there is something within you which is no part of your body, but which moves your body, acts in it, and is better than your body, and your body lives upon it, may hold up your hands.

(*All held up hands.*)

How many think a good name for this is mind,

Intuition of Spirit.
Analysis of Spirit.

(*Several held up hands.*)

or soul, or God, or intellect, or conscience, or spirit ?

(*Most agreed upon God as the best name. One said Spirit was the best ; another said God and Spirit were the same.*)

MR. ALCOTT. I prefer the word SPIRIT. And soon we shall begin to talk of a particular Spirit that came into the world and took a body ; and acted in the world ; and we shall inquire what became of it when it left the world. What Spirit are we going to talk about ?

ALL. Jesus Christ.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you will always know hereafter what I mean by the word *spirit*, when I use it ?

(*All held up their hands.*)

ANDREW. I think the word *conscience* would be a better word than spirit. (See Note 10.)

MR. ALCOTT. *Conscience* is spirit acting on duty ; *Mind* is spirit thinking ; *Heart* is spirit loving ; *Soul* is spirit feeling ; *Sense* is spirit inquiring into the external world ; *Body* is the instrument and organ of spirit. The action of these is divided between consciousness and conscience.

Functions of
Spirit.

CONVERSATION II.

TESTIMONY OF NATURE AND SCRIPTURE TO SPIRIT.

NATURE AND SCRIPTURE.

Idea of Spirit.

II. ANALOGICAL EVIDENCE.

1. Physiological Facts. — Reproduction and growth; light and shade; incubation and birth; budding and efflorescence; fountain and stream.
2. Psychological Facts. — Birth and death; renovation and decay; sense of imperfection; standard of perfection in conscience; idea of absolute and derivative being.
3. Historical Facts. — Record of spirit, or Scripture; General Preface to the Gospels from the Sacred Text; credibility of witnesses; authenticity of the Gospel Record; sum of results.

Idea of Spirit. MR. ALCOTT. What was the conclusion to which we came, after the conversation of Wednesday last?

SEVERAL. That there was a Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Did each of you conclude and feel it proved *in your own heart*, that there is a Spirit?

(*All held up hands.*)

MR. ALCOTT. What do you understand by an *inward proof* of Spirit?

CHARLES. What one feels, and thinks.

Analogical
Evidence.

MR. ALCOTT. Are there *outward evidences* of Spirit?

Physiological
Facts.

CHARLES. Actions, any actions, outward actions, an earthquake, the creeping of a worm.

GEORGE K. Moving, the creeping of a baby.

LEMUEL. The moving of a leaf, lightning.

- ANDREW. A waterfall, a rose.
- FRANK. Walking.
- SAMUEL R. A tree.
- EDWARD C. A star.
- SUSAN. The sun.
- GEORGE B. A steam engine.
- MR. ALCOTT. Where does the spirit work in that ?
- GEORGE B. In the men that work it.
- CHARLES. No ; in the steam.
- EDWARD J. In the machinery, and the steam, and the men, and all.
- MR. ALCOTT. You perceive then what I mean by outward evidence of spirit ?
- CHARLES. Things, external nature.
- MR. ALCOTT. And this will be our subject in part to-day.

Reproduction
and Growth.

MR. ALCOTT. Do smaller things prove greater things, or greater things smaller things ? How many do not understand me ?

(Several held up their hands.)

Does an acorn prove there has been an oak, or an oak prove there has been an acorn ?

(Some said one and some the other, as they did also to the next question.)

MR. ALCOTT. Which was first in time, an acorn or an oak ?

GEORGE K. Sometimes one is first and sometimes the other. In the woods, oaks grow up wild ; and you can plant acorns and have oaks.

SAMUEL R. I think God made oaks first, and all the other oaks there have ever been, came from the acorns of those first oaks.

Light and Shade.

MR. ALCOTT. Does light prove darkness, or darkness light ?

SEVERAL. Each proves the other.

MR. ALCOTT. Can nothing prove something ?

ALL. No.

MR. ALCOTT. But darkness is mere absence of light.
Is darkness any thing to your spirit ?

SEVERAL. No.

CHARLES. I think darkness is something.

MR. ALCOTT. Is darkness any thing to your senses ?

ANDREW. No ; it only seems so.

MR. ALCOTT. What does it seem to be ?

ANDREW. It is the shadow of light.

Incubation and
Birth.

MR. ALCOTT. Does the egg foretel the
chick, or the chick the egg ?

*(They first said one, and then the other, and
then both, and some referred to God who could
make either.)*

Budding and Ef-
florescence.

MR. ALCOTT. Which has most mean-
ing, a bud or a flower ?

SEVERAL. A flower.

SUSAN. A bud, because it is going to be a flower,
and makes you think of it.

EDWARD J. Perhaps the bud will be picked.

MR. ALCOTT. Accidents are always excepted.

*(He then asked like questions about many things,
among the rest a brook and the ocean, the cradle
and the grave, and similar answers were returned.
He remarked that their answers showed which
minds were historical and which were analytic.
He then went on :)*

Psychological Facts.

Which is the superior, spirit or body ?

ALL. Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Lemuel, will you give me a reason ?

LEMUEL. Because the body decays, and the spirit cannot decay ; and the spirit is not seen ; and when the spirit is gone the body cannot do any thing.

Renovation and Decay.

MR. ALCOTT. Is it the invisibleness and the undecaying nature of the spirit, which makes it superior, then ? Have you ever seen any perfect visible thing ?

GEORGE B. Yes ; a rose.

MR. ALCOTT. Did it remain perfect ?

GEORGE B. No.

MR. ALCOTT. What thing is perfect and remains perfect ?

GEORGE K. Jesus' body was perfect, for it ascended into heaven.

MR. ALCOTT. Is there proof that his body ascended ?

GEORGE K. The Bible says so.

CHARLES. The Bible says the disciples saw him ascend.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes, they saw him ascend ; yet not perhaps his body ;—and besides, Jesus' body suffered pain ; and was it perfect, while it was suffering pain ?

(No answer.)

Can you say that your bodily senses are perfect, that they have never deceived you ?

(None held up hands.)

When you look round the world, and see no perfect, visible thing, what do you feel ?

(No answer.)

Sense of Imperfection.

Is there not something within you which measures all imperfection ?

CHARLES. Yes, the thought of Perfection.

MR. ALCOTT. By what do you measure your thought of Perfection ?

CHARLES. By God.

MR. ALCOTT. Is the imperfection in the outward world a proof of something perfect within ?

(*No answer.*)

For instance, you tell me that you have seen a person do something wrong: now, what do you make the standard ? How do you know it is wrong ?

CHARLES. By Reason.

LEMUEL. No ; Judgment judges.

EDWARD J. We measure by the spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. What is in the spirit ; a sense of—what ?

LEMUEL. A Sense of Good—of Perfection.

MR. ALCOTT. Where is all proof, then ?

LEMUEL. In Conscience and in God.

Standard of Per-
fection in Consci-
ence.

MR. ALCOTT. And when Jesus utters the divine injunction, “Be ye Perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is Perfect,” he does but reannounce the sentiment of Duty in every conscience, which ever utters the same words.

Now, do perfect things prove imperfect things, or imperfect things prove perfect things ?

GEORGE K. They prove each other.

MR. ALCOTT. Does your spirit prove there is a God, or because there is a God, must your spirit be ?

CHARLES. Each proves the other.

Idea of Absolute
and Derivative
Being.

MR. ALCOTT. All proof then is in God, spirit being its own proof, because there is more of God in it, than in any thing outward. As an acorn reminds you of an oak, so does the spirit within remind you of God. Your spirits, like the acorns, (if you choose to carry on the figure,) drop off from God, to plant themselves in Time. Once they were within the oak, but they come out individual differing acorns, the seeds of new oaks. The other things mentioned are proofs of the same kind. Spirits are born out of

the Supreme Spirit, and by their power of reproducing spirit, constantly prove their own existence from his existence, and his existence from their own. — That there is a spirit in us all you have proofs, as you have shown.

There are yet other proofs of spirit, especially the Life of Jesus Christ, which we are going to study. Historical Facts. He took a body and came into the world almost two thousand years before we did. He was seen, and those who saw and knew him, — his friends, — wrote down what he said and did ; and their words make what are called the GOSPELS. Luke was one of these friends. He began an account of Jesus, — the Gospel of his life, that is, the Good News of his life, — in these words : Mr. Alcott read

THE GENERAL PREFACE TO THE GOSPELS.

MARK i. 1.

LUKE i. 1-4.

A. D. 44. Probably written at Jerusalem.

Record of Gospels 1 The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus or Scripture. Christ, the Son of God.

A. D. 64. Written in Achaia.

1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word ;

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

You perceive that Luke wrote this Gospel — this good news of Jesus Christ — for a particular friend. He had himself learned most of the facts from others, for he was not an eyewitness from the beginning.

Credibility of Witnesses.

Now I suppose that you can place entire confidence in these words, which are called

the Gospels. You doubtless believe that they have a meaning, all of them, worth finding out ; and you feel sure that they are all true.

GEORGE K. There are some things I think *truer*. I believe those words, but I am more sure of some things.

MR. ALCOTT. Of what ?

GEORGE K. Why — that the Stove is in the room. (See Note 11.)

CHARLES. I do not believe that those words are the same as Luke wrote down. (See Note 12.)

Authenticity of
the Gospel Rec-
ord. MR. ALCOTT. Luke wrote in Greek ; and these words are translated. But the Greek words are yet preserved, and those are the very words of Luke, as can be satisfactorily proved ; for great care was taken of so valuable a writing, by the earliest Christians.

(Some more conversation ensued on this subject, in which Charles was told that there had been a great deal of dispute concerning these writings in the early ages ; and that it was now an undisputed fact, — except by an individual here and there, — that these writings all belonged to the persons by whom they were said to be written. And that this was a subject he might examine for himself, when he was older.)
(See Note 13.)

Subject. You may now tell me what has been the subject of to-day's conversation.

LEMUEL. Outward Evidences of Spirit.

CHARLES. In Nature.

OTHERS. And in the Gospel.

MR. ALCOTT. And the Evidence for the Gospel Record.

CONVERSATION III.

REVELATION OF SPIRIT IN NATURE AND HUMANITY.

INSPIRATION.

Divine Genius of St. John the Evangelist.

III. ONTOLOGICAL EVIDENCE.

The Incarnate Word from the Sacred Text. — Inspiration. — Generation of Nature from Spirit. — Idea of Divinity and Creation. — Inspiration of Humanity. — Animation of Nature. — Inspiration of Scripture. — Idea of Perfect Humanity. — Sense of Human Imperfection. — Difference of Humanity from Divinity. — Likeness of Humanity to Divinity. — Sense of Perfection in Conscience. — Unity of God and Man. — Spiritual Presence. — Filial Union of Man with God. — Incarnation of Divinity. — Limitations of the Flesh. — Self-Perfectibility. — Subject. — Conclusion.

Divine Genius
of St. John.

MR. ALCOTT. Another friend of Jesus, who wrote Good News of his life, was John. His Gospel is very interesting. He seemed to understand, how and why Jesus said and did things, better than the other disciples. The others seem to know what he did; John seems to know why he did it. Jesus loved John especially, — because his spiritual vision was clearer than the rest, perhaps. And this spirituality made him understand Jesus better than the rest did. (See Note 14.) See how he begins his gospel. Mr. Alcott read

THE INCARNATE WORD.

JOHN i. 1-5.

A. D. 97.
Written at
Ephesus.

- Inspiration. 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 The same was in the beginning with God.
3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (See Note 15.)

Ontological Evidence.

Now those who have some dim idea of what these words mean, may hold up their hands.

(*Several did.*)

Now, those who think they have a clear sense of their meaning:

(*Several hands fell.*)

Now, let each who can express it tell what idea these words convey to him.

Generation of Nature from Spirit.

JOSIAH. They seemed to me to mean that there was nothing without God.

JOSEPH. Nothing ever would have been without God.

EDWARD B. God made every thing that was and would be.

AUGUSTINE. There could be no life without God, for all life comes from God. He is the fountain of life.

WILLIAM B. God is in every thing.

GEORGE K. God was the first thing, then he made things. If he had not been first, there would have been no other things.

CHARLES. God made every thing, is in every thing, and will continue in every thing to the end. (See Note 16.)

LUCIA. There must have been spirit before there was any thing else. There must have been spirit to make the world before there could be any world.

Idea of Divinity and Creation.

ALEXANDER. Every thing was God, first.

WILLIAM B. Every thing is God, now.

JOSIAH. I think all spirits are emblematic of God. Just as images of stone are copies of men's bodies, so the souls of men are copies of God. I mean all good souls.

FRANK. I think the body is the shadow of the spirit.

LEMUEL. If, as Josiah says, all good spirits are emblems of God, what must bad spirits be the emblems of?

MR. ALCOTT. We will not begin on that subject now, Lemuel. It will come bye and bye. (See Note 17.)

LUCIA. God must have thought within his mind before any thing could be made, and it was his thought that shaped things.

MR. ALCOTT. Was his thought the word then ?

CHARLES. First there was God ; then he thought, then he spoke the thought in a Word ; and so there was a World.

MR. ALCOTT. And did Moses intend to express the same Idea in the account of the Creation : God said let things be — let things come out of me. How many of you have heard the words, “ In him we live, and move, and have our being ? ”

(All held up hands.)

When you speak, what goes out of your mouth ?

JOHN D. Sound.

Inspiration of
Man.

MR. ALCOTT. What makes sound ?

LUCIA. Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. What does the spirit make of sounds ?

LUCIA. Words.

MR. ALCOTT. What action of spirit makes words ?

CHARLES. Thought.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you think your spirits are God's breathings ?

(Several held up hands.)

And if our spirits should think out, and utter God's breathings, would our utterance be the Word of God ?

(Several assented.)

Was Jesus Christ's Spirit a pure breathing or inspiration of God's Spirit, and may what he said justly be called the pure Inspired Word of God ?

(All held up their hands.)

Are our spirits also, the Word of God ; the breathings of God ; an Inspiration of God ?

(They generally held up hands.)

Animation of
Nature.

And is the Outward World also a Word of God ; — the Manifestation of God, — God in Things ; — the Shadow of God, as Frank said ; an Emblem of God, as Josiah said ?

(They held up hands.)

And besides the word of God within, which is CONSCIENCE ; and the word of God in the outward world, is there also a word here, written out to our sense ? (laying his hand on the Bible.)

Inspiration of
Scripture.

(They all held up hands.) (See Note 18.)

Who was the most perfect Image, Representation, Emblem, Revelation of God ? Who showed forth God most completely ?

Idea of perfect
Humanity.

ALMOST ALL. Jesus Christ.

FRANK. I first thought of Moses. Was he not as good a picture of God as Jesus

Christ ?

JOSIAH. I first thought of the angels.

MR. ALCOTT. And if God revealed himself in Jesus, would he not also in all men ? or was Jesus different from all others ? Had he something within him which you have not ? (See Note 19.)

(All held up hands but Josiah.)

Sense of Human
Imperfection.

JOSIAH. I think I have every thing Jesus had, only he had more.

WILLIAM B. He had more power.

CHARLES. He had more power because he had more faith.

WILLIAM B. I think all his power flowed out of his love.

LUCIA. We have a great deal in us, but Jesus had more and used it better.

MR. ALCOTT. Yet you all appear to think that you have something within you godlike, spiritual, like Jesus, though not so much, and what is this ?

(Several spoke and said severally,)

Spirit. Faith. Goodness. Conscience.

Difference of
Humanity from
Divinity

MR. ALCOTT. Now, does your spirit differ in any sense from God's spirit? Each may answer.

CHARLES. God made our spirits.

MR. ALCOTT. They differ from His then in being derived?

GEORGE K. They are not so good.

WILLIAM B. They have not so much power.

AUGUSTINE. I don't think our spirit does differ much.

ANOTHER. God uses his spirit more.

CHARLES. God is spirit, we are spirit and body.

JOSIAH. He differs from us, as a king's body differs from ours. A king's body is arrayed with more beautiful garments than his subjects. And God's spirit is arrayed with more goodness than ours.

EDWARD B. God's spirit is a million times larger than ours, and we come out of him, as the drops of the ocean.

GEORGE K. God's spirit is a great deal larger and has more power.

MR. ALCOTT. You do not mean larger in size of body?

GEORGE K. No, he has no body.

Likeness of Hu-
manity to Divin-
ity.

MR. ALCOTT. You seem to think, generally, that the difference of God's spirit and yours is not in kind but degree.

But now tell me in what conscience and God are alike.

ALEXANDER. God can love and so can we.

FRANKLIN. Our consciences are a part of him.

WILLIAM B. God has faith and truth; we have the same in our spirit as he, only we do not use them.

RECORDER. What do you mean by God's faith?

WILLIAM B. He had faith in his power to do. Before he created the world he thought he had power to do it. I mean he knew his own power.

JOSIAH. The only difference is, God's spirit is better than ours.

MR. ALCOTT. Is there none of God's *best* in us ?

JOSIAH and FRANK. Yes.

Sense of the Perfect. MR. ALCOTT. Yes ; conscience is the Sense of the Perfect or of God.

Unity of God and Man. Now can you tell in what conscience and God agree, and in what they differ ?

SEVERAL. God is Perfection itself. God and conscience are not exactly alike ; there is a difference ; God is still better than conscience.

NATHAN. God's spirit is better than ours.

GEORGE K. Our spirits are not so large. They have a great deal of power, but not so much as God has, because he uses his power more.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think God has a conscience ?

GEORGE K. Yes.

CHARLES. God is Conscience.

SEVERAL SPOKE. So I should think.

MR. ALCOTT. Are any of you able to describe any difference between God, who is conscience, you say, and conscience in you ?

(None spoke.)

ANDREW. Conscience is God within us.

(There was a slight movement of inattention, and Mr. Alcott said)

Spiritual Presence. Oh ! what if I should call upon some Spiritual Power to descend from heaven into visible presence, and take the supervision of you all, and write down in his book what passes within your minds — as our Superintendant cannot do.

SEVERAL. I should like it !

MR. ALCOTT. And do you not say that such a Power has descended? Is not Conscience such a superintendant, keeping a record? He is not visible, with a shining countenance and glistening wings, to your body's eyesight, but is he not to the Spirit within you?

(They all responded, smilingly.)

ALEXANDER. Our conscience is God's Child.

AUGUSTINE. Our conscience is God acting.

FRANKLIN and FREDERIC. God has more — and uses it more — but ours is of the same kind.

SAMUEL R. God is better.

WILLIAM B. God has more power.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the nature of that power?

WILLIAM B. It is inward — spiritual.

LUCIA. Our consciences are young; God is their Father.

Filial Union of
Man with God.

MR. ALCOTT. The parental idea comes to your minds. How did Jesus signify his connexion with God?

EDWARD B. He said God was the Father, and he was the Son.

MR. ALCOTT. Does the relation of father and son express something better, deeper, more spiritual than that of king and subject?

(All said yes.)

MR. ALCOTT. Jesus said he was the Son — the child of God. Are we also God's sons?

AUGUSTINE. Jesus was God himself.

Incarnation of
Divinity. MR. ALCOTT. Well, explain your meaning.

AUGUSTINE. I mean, God once took a body.

MR. ALCOTT. You all hear Augustine's answer. Now all rise who think with him.

(Almost all rose; but some, with hesitation.)

RECORDER. Suppose you were as good as you could be; should you think it right to say, your soul was God himself?

(John B. rose with some others.)

Why do not the rest of you think so ; as well as that Jesus Christ is God ?

SEVERAL. It would not be proper to say so, because we are not so good as Jesus.

JOHN B. I thought you said—suppose our souls were as good as they ought to be ?

RECORDER. I did say so.

WILLIAM B. Oh ! before I was born—I think *I* was a part of God himself.

MANY OTHERS. So do I.

MR. ALCOTT. Who thinks his own spirit is the child of God ?

(All held up hands.)

Now, is God your Father in the same sense that he is the Father of Jesus ?

(Most held up hands.)

GEORGE K. Jesus was more the Son of God than we are.

LEMUEL. He had more of that same.

MR. ALCOTT. Was Jesus Christ perfect ?

(All held up hands but two.)

CHARLES. Because Jesus had a body, he
Limitations of the Flesh. could not be perfect.

GEORGE K. Jesus was not perfect, because he was made by God. God is perfect, because he made himself.

MR. ALCOTT. 'Then he was imperfect only in that he drew his existence from God ?

GEORGE K. Jesus did not make the world, so he was not so perfect as God. (See Note 20.)

RECORDER. Which do you think is the greater work ; to make a spirit pure and perfectly good ; or to make an outward world ?

GEORGE K. It would be harder to make a world.

MR. ALCOTT. Would it be harder to make a material world than a spiritual world? and which is the best?

GEORGE K. The spiritual world is the best. But I am sure I could not make a world — and I could —

(He stopped.)

RECORDER. Could you be perfect?

(He still paused.)

MR. ALCOTT. So you think it would be hard to manage the earth and rocks and marble, mountains and ocean.

GEORGE K. Yes; for I know I could not
Self-Perfection. in any way make a world; but if I tried as hard as I could, and tried all the time, I could be perfect. I know it is very hard to be perfect — to love all the time and never be angry and never do wrong; but we can — we ought to be perfect, and so we can be. It would be necessary to be perfect in the first place, to make a world. It was because Jesus was perfect he could work miracles. (See Note 21.)

MR. ALCOTT. Could you work miracles, if you were perfect?

GEORGE K. If I was perfect I could. It is the spirit that makes bodies, and if my spirit was perfect it would know all that spirit could do, and how to do it.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you know how Jesus worked a miracle — cured the withered arm, for instance?

GEORGE. I suppose he told the man's spirit to go into his arm, and make it what it ought to be.

MR. ALCOTT. Make bones and muscles whole?

GEORGE. Yes; the spirit makes bodies — made them in the first place.

RECORDER. So, if your spirit was perfected, you think you could make a whole world?

GEORGE K. Oh yes, easily.

RECORDER. Was it Jesus' spirit that made the bones and muscles of that withered arm whole, or the man's own spirit ?

GEORGE. It was the man's own spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. How could he command the man's spirit ?

FRANK. I suppose he made him feel faith.

Subject. MR. ALCOTT. What have we been talking about this morning ?

(They severally answered)

The Spirit. Spirit in God. Spirit in Christ. Spirit in Ourselves.

MR. ALCOTT. The subject is the Revelation of Spirit in the Inspired Word—in God, Man, and Nature. (See Note 22.)

Conclusion. And we have now come to several conclusions : 1. That we have a Spirit. 2. That there is a Spirit greater and better than ours. 3. That our Spirit is of the same kind as that greater and better One. 4. That Jesus Christ expressed the connexion of his Spirit with God's Spirit, as that of Son to Father. 5. That we do, or may, bear the same filial relation to God. And, 6. That all are a Revelation of God, the Infinite and Original Spirit.

CONVERSATION IV.

TESTIMONY OF HUMANITY TO SPIRIT.

INSPIRATION.

IV. PROPHETIC EVIDENCE.

John the Herald of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Reason and Inspiration. — Announceement of Spirit to the Senses. — Deseent of Spirit into Humanity. — Idea of Angels; of Pre-Existence; of Prophets and Prophecy. — Intimation of Nature. — Prophetic Faculty. — Prophetic Vision. — Inspiration of Human Reason; of Human Understanding; of Human Will. — Incarnation of Spirit to the Senses. — Inspiration of Conscience. — Filial Union of the Soul with God.

MR. ALCOTT recalled the subject of the last conversation, and then read the lesson for the day :

JOHN THE HERALD OF JESUS.

JOHN i. 6-18.

A. D. 97.
Written at
Ephesus.

Reason and Inspiration. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

9 *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name :

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me : for he was before me.

A. D. 97.
Written at
Ephesus.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

Prophetic Evidence. He then asked the usual question,

Announcement
of Spirit.

What thoughts does this suggest to your minds?

WILLIAM B. I thought that Jesus was better than John ; and that John only came to announce him. (See Note 23.)

CHARLES. John came on earth to say that Jesus was coming, so that when Jesus had come they should know that he was the Messiah.

MARTHA. Jesus was better than John or Moses. (See Note 24.)

AUGUSTINE. John was only to represent what Jesus would be, so as to make them ready.

EDWARD B. John came to tell the people that the Messiah was coming, and they must look out for him.

FRANKLIN. John was the sign of truth ; Jesus the truth.

GEORGE K. The Light was Jesus. John came to tell that it was coming.

LEMUEL. John was the sign of the light ; Jesus the light.

WELLES. John came to convince the people that somebody was to be sent from God to teach them.

JOSEPH. John was good, but not so good as Jesus.

ANDREW. John caused the star, which the wise men saw when Jesus was born, which brought them to Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you mean the star is an emblem of John ?

ANDREW. John caused the star.

MR. ALCOTT. Did John make the star ?

ANDREW. No, God made every thing. It was on account of John, he made that star. (See Note 25.)

MR. ALCOTT. Was John the star ?

(*No answer.*)

Was the star John ?

(*No answer.*)

How many of you think that I might say with truth, that a star appeared when each one of you was born ?
(See Note 26.)

(*All smiled and held up hands.*)

JOSIAH. I thought the same as some of the rest said. The only thought I have now is, that John was the shadow of Jesus. (See Note 27.)

NATHAN. John came down first to tell that Jesus was coming.

LUCIA. Moses taught by the law and tried to make people good by that ; but Jesus taught by goodness, by being good himself ; and John came to prepare the people for Jesus. (See Note 28.)

JOSIAH. John lighted the candle. Jesus was the light.

MR. ALCOTT. "There was a man sent
Descent of Spirit into Humanity. from God." How ?

NATHAN. Sent down from Heaven.

MR. ALCOTT. Do all think so ?

(*All held up hands, and many said*)

Every body came down from heaven.

(*They corrected themselves.*)

No ! every *spirit* did. (See Note 29.)

LUCIA. God made him and put power into him.

GEORGE K. God made him and sent an angel to carry him to earth.

LEMUEL. His spirit was brought down by angels and put into a body.

ALEXANDER. God sent one of his angels into a body.

MR. ALCOTT. I should like to know what you each think angels are. (See Note 30.)

Idea of Angels. GEORGE K. Angels are good spirits ; once they were in bodies and did good with their bodies.

FRANK. Very good spirits that have been in a body.

LUCIA. Spirits in heaven, before they have ever had a body, are angels.

MARTHA. Angels are good spirits with or without bodies.

CHARLES. I think some angels have lived in bodies, and some are going to be born.

EDWARD B. The spirits of the bad are the devil's angels. (See Note 31.)

MR. ALCOTT. As many as think John was an angel before he was sent, signify it.

(All held up hands but Josiah.)

JOSIAH. God at first only had one angel, but he wanted more, and so he determined that when people died, they should become angels.

MR. ALCOTT. People, then, were not angels first ?

JOSIAH. No, they were made at the time they began to live on earth.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you think you were angels, before you were boys and girls ?

(All thought so but Josiah.)

Idea of Pre-Existence. EDWARD B. I think our ideas of God and divine things are faint remembrances of our angelic life. (See Note 32.)

Idea of Prophets and Prophecy. MR. ALCOTT. Why did John come to bear witness ?

LUCIA. If they did not know Jesus was coming, they would not have believed him when he did come.

WILLIAM B. They would not have believed John was a prophet.

MR. ALCOTT. What is a prophet? (See Note 33.)

LUCIA. A man who tells things that are going to happen.

MR. ALCOTT. How does he know these things?

SEVERAL. Because he has more faith than we have.

MR. ALCOTT. Do any of you think you have in your souls, what makes a prophet?

(Several.)

Do you think that were you to use all that is in your spirit, you might also be prophets?

SEVERAL. If we had faith enough.

WILLIAM B. If we had love enough.

CHARLES. A prophet first has a little love, and that gives the impulse to more, and so on, until he becomes so full of love, he knows every thing.

MR. ALCOTT. Do prophets look within or without to find out what is going to happen without?

SEVERAL. Within.

Prophetic Vision.

JOSIAH. But I don't think so.

MR. ALCOTT. Where do you think they look?

JOSIAH. To God.

MR. ALCOTT. Is God within or without?

JOSIAH. He is in heaven.

MR. ALCOTT. Is heaven within? What do you mean by within?

SEVERAL. Within the spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Do things happen first within or without the spirit?

SEVERAL. Within. (See Note 34.)

MR. ALCOTT. A prophet, finding out what goes on within the spirit, can tell what will happen without. They are called Seers, not outseers. Their sight is insight. Who is the universal prophet?

ALL AT ONCE. God. (See Note 35.)

Intimations of
Nature.

MR. ALCOTT. What does an acorn prophesy, or intimate ?

ALL. An oak.

MR. ALCOTT. What does a child suggest ?

SEVERAL. A man.

MR. ALCOTT. What does a caterpillar foretel ?

ALL. A butterfly.

Prophetic Faculty in Man.

MARTHA. It is impossible to have prophets now. (See note 36.)

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think it impossible to have prophets now ?

(Some held up hands.)

Who think it is possible to have prophets ?

(Several held up hands.)

Now, let me hear those who think it impossible tell their reasons.

GEORGE K. Because there is no need of them. (See Note 37.) There have been enough to teach people. Now fathers and mothers and others, who can read the prophecies and Gospels, can teach their children, and make them good.

EDWARD B. I think the spirit has gone away from men now, because there are no men good enough to be prophets.

CHARLES. Ever since Jesus was crucified, people have been growing worse and worse, because the goodness that was in the world has been lost, and so there is not faith enough to make a prophet.

MR. ALCOTT. Do any of you think you could get faith enough to make a prophet ?

(Some held up hands. — Mr. Alcott made some remarks on prophecy. — He then read all the verses that have the word LIGHT in them, and asked)

Inspiration of the
Human Faculties. What does the light mean ?
SEVERALLY. Mind. Faith. Truth. Wis-
dom. Love. Goodness. Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Who was the brightest and most shining spirit that ever took a body ; the most full of truth, faith, and love ?

SOME. Jesus.

SOME. John.

OTHERS. God. (See note 38.)

MR. ALCOTT. How does Jesus light every man ?

JOSIAH. We may be compared to candles, and John may be compared to a large candle in the middle of all the rest. And Jesus comes to light all the candles.

WILLIAM B. Jesus is the fire which kindles.

(*Mr. Alcott read*)

Inspiration of Reason. "Who was in the world, and the world knew him not ?"

SEVERALLY. God. Jesus. John.

MR. ALCOTT. How is God in the world, and the world does not know him ?

JOSIAH. The sense is, God is in our spirits, yet cannot be seen, because he is a spirit, which cannot be seen by our outward eyes.

CHARLES. God is in our spirits, but he is nothing to our senses. (See Note 39.)

(*Mr. Alcott read*)

"He came to his own ;" to whom ?

SEVERALLY. To men. To his own dominion. To our spirits. To both the outward and the inward world.

(*Mr. Alcott read*)

"And his own received him not."

LUCIA. His own family did not believe in him.

SEVERAL. Men did not believe in him.

MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by "Sons of God" ?

SEVERALLY. Angels. Our spirits.

MR. ALCOTT. How can we become angels ; sons ?

SEVERAL. By Love and faith.

Inspiration
of Will.

MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by "will of the flesh" ? (See Note 40.)

LEMUEL. Appetite.

MR. ALCOTT. What by the "will of man" ?

LUCIA. Thought. (See Note 41.)

MR. ALCOTT. What is the "will of God" ?

SEVERALLY. Goodness. Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. When God's will is in action, what is it called ?

CHARLES. Creation.

MR. ALCOTT. What does he create ?

SEVERALLY. Happiness. Goodness. Holiness.

Incarnation
of Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. How was the "Word made flesh" ? (See Note 42.)

(*No answer.*)

What did we call the Word the other day ?

ALL. Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. What did we call flesh ?

ALL. Body.

MR. ALCOTT. How does our spirit manifest to the eyes its existence on earth ?

FRANKLIN, LUCIA, &c. By the body.

MR. ALCOTT. Then the use of the body is to show that a particular person exists on earth ? And how does this person manifest that love exists in his spirit ?

CHARLES. By expression.

SEVERAL. Of the eyes ; of the countenance.

MR. ALCOTT. How does kindness show itself to the eyes ?

WELLES. By actions ; kind actions.

FRANKLIN. By caresses.

MR. ALCOTT. The spirit of Jesus, born of God and having taken a body, is called the only begotten Son of God. (See Note 43.)

Inspiration of
Conscience. What does it mean by "it dwelt among us" ?

ONE. Jesus lived on earth.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the glory of the only begotten ?

SEVERALLY. Faith. Love. Truth. Wisdom. Holiness.

MR. ALCOTT. Grace means that which favors, assists. What does it favor us with ?

SEVERAL. Holiness.

MR. ALCOTT. "For he was before me." Who ?

SEVERAL. The spirit of Christ.

MR. ALCOTT. Whose body came first ?

ALL. John's.

MR. ALCOTT. "We have received of his fulness." Who ?

ALL. The disciples.

MR. ALCOTT. "The law came by Moses." What law ?

SEVERAL. The commandments.

MR. ALCOTT. How does the law of Moses differ from the law of the Gospels ?

Law of
Holiness. LUCIA AND OTHERS. Not so much holiness could be brought out by it.

Filial Union. MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by the Son, "in the bosom of the Father" ?

FRANCIS. Jesus ; in God's love.

MR. ALCOTT. Bosom is then —

LUCIA. An emblem of God's love.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you think your spirits are in the bosom of God ?

(Several.)

FRANCIS. If we love God.

MR. ALCOTT. Who has declared God ?

ALL. Christ.

MR. ALCOTT. What in you declares God ?

SEVERAL. The spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Have you all this spirit assuring you that God is in you and loves ?

(They held up hands.)

Do any of you think so because your parents, teachers, or ministers, say so ?

(Many held up hands.)

ANDREW. I feel it.

MR. ALCOTT. To whom are we most indebted for knowledge of God ?

ALL. To Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. Our subject to day has been inspiration, as it was in our last conversation. In our next, we shall speak of outward facts. We are coming to the history of the appearing of spirit on the earth in a body — to its advent.

CONVERSATION V.

ANNUNCIATION OF SPIRIT TO PATERNITY.

PATERNAL SENTIMENT.

V. EVIDENCE OF PATERNAL SENTIMENT.

Annunciation of John the Baptist. — Vision of Zacharias from the Sacred Text. — Paternity. — Vision of Paternity. — Consequences of Unbelief. — Obedience. — Emblem of Aspiration. — Theory of Visions. — Festival at Birth. — Idea of Holy Ghost. — Spiritual Culture. — Intuition of Conscience. — Conception of Spirit. — Close.

Review. MR. ALCOTT. What has been the subject of our conversations since we began the study of the Gospels ?

WILLIAM B. Our spirit.

FRANKLIN. Christ's spirit.

LUCIA. God's spirit.

GEORGE K. Spirit.

WILLIAM B. We spoke of the parts of spirit. (See Note 44.)

MR. ALCOTT. What were some of its parts ?

WILLIAM B. Faith and Love. (See Note 45.)

FRANK. Goodness.

EDWARD B. Truth.

ANDREW. Conscience.

LUCY. The spirit's senses. (See Note 46.)

Annunciation of John the Baptist. MR. ALCOTT. I am now going to read how that spirit — John's spirit, which you have decided came from God — took a body. It was about two thousand years ago, in the country of Judea. (See the Map.) It was governed by a king called Herod. Mr. A. then read the

VISION OF ZACHARIAS.

LUKE i. 5-25.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 6.
Julian Period,
4708.

Temple at
Jerusalem.

Paternity 5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

* Exod. xxx. 7.
Levit. xvi. 17. 10 * And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

† Mal. iv. 6. 16 † And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 6.
Julian Period,
4708.

Temple at
Jerusalem.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

He then asked them to tell, what thoughts had entered their minds while he was reading.

Vision of Pater-
nity.

JOSEPH. I couldn't see how Zacharias could tell whether an angel had come or not — for an angel is invisible — and is not to be seen outside, but within.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think Zacharias made a mistake?

JOSEPH. No, but I don't see how he knew. (See Note 47.)

CHARLES. I thought he saw the angel. But I could not understand how it came.

GEORGE B. I thought Zacharias ought to have believed the angel's words.

Consequences
of Unbelief.

ALEXANDER. I don't see why the angel made him dumb, except he did not wish Zacharias to tell the people he was going to have a child. (See Note 48.)

ANDREW. I thought that man wanted to have a child, so he prayed for it, but he did not believe the angel, because he could not see how the angel could know God was going to give him one. (See Note 49.)

FRANKLIN. I thought he dreamed it.

MR. ALCOTT. Is a dream a reality ?

FRANKLIN. Sometimes. It was in this case. (See Note 50.)

EDWARD B. I did not see why the angel made him dumb. I don't wonder he did not believe ; he could not tell but it was an evil spirit come to tempt him.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you believe in evil spirits ?

EDWARD B. I don't see why evil spirits should not come as well as good ones. (See Note 51.)

EDWARD J. I don't see how it was right for God to make Zacharias dumb, for God must have made him disbelieve.

EMMA. I should not think the disbelief came from God. God certainly gave Zacharias power to believe.

GEORGE K. Now, Mr Alcott ! do you think it was right for God to make Zacharias dumb ?

MR. ALCOTT. Why do you think it was wrong ?

GEORGE K. I don't think Zacharias was wrong in not believing in the angel on the angel's own word. God ought to have convinced Zacharias that it was a good angel. It is not always wrong to doubt. Zacharias, perhaps, could not believe such good news, because he might have thought he was not good enough to have the child. Very good people often think they are worse than they are. I think the angel ought to have explained to Zacharias.

EMMA. Zacharias did not entirely doubt. He asked for a sign, and a sign was given.

EDWARD B. Gabriel made him dumb, not to punish him, but to give him a sign of God's power, and convince him that God could make old people have children, or do any thing. (See Note 52.)

MR. ALCOTT. But why should not old people have children ?

ONE. Because they would not live long enough to bring them up.

LUCIA. Zacharias asked for a sign. His being dumb was a sign.

Obedience. MR. ALCOTT read the verse, "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." What is blameless?

CHARLES. "Blameless" is obedient to conscience.

MR. ALCOTT. How do commandments and ordinances differ?

EDWARD B. A commandment is express, and one will be punished who does not obey. An ordinance is more free; baptism, and Jesus's feasts are ordinances, that may be followed or not.

Emblem of Aspiration. MR. ALCOTT read. "His lot was to burn incense." For what?

CHARLES. To carry up the prayers.

SOME added. As an emblem.

MR. ALCOTT. What are prayers?

WILLIAM B. Asking God not only with your mouth, but with your heart and spirit, to take care of you, and give you what you need.

MR. ALCOTT. What goes up?

WILLIAM B. Your spirit in faith; your heart in love. (See Note 53.)

Theory of Visions. MR. ALCOTT. "And there appeared unto him an angel." Have any of you seen an angel?

FRANKLIN. I have seen one in my soul, but not with my outward eyes.

SEVERAL. So have I. (See Note 54.)

WILLIAM B. I never saw one in my soul, till I saw Greenough's group. (See Note 55.)

MR. ALCOTT. Have all of you seen angels like Franklin ? Those may rise who never have seen one even so. (See Note 56.)

(Joseph, Andrew, and others rose.)

EDWARD B. I think there can be spirits without bodies, but they can only be seen by miracle, as Zacharias saw this one ; and such miracles do not happen in these times. (See Note 57.)

MR. ALCOTT. Can you conceive that when God sends a message, — a thought into the soul, — the mind of the person may give a shape to the message ?

(Some thought they could, others, not.)

Might not the Angel, or God's message, be real though invisible, and the mind of Zacharias give it shape ?

(There was a difference of opinion.) (See Note 58.)

"Thy prayer is heard." What prayer ?

SEVERAL. For a child.

(Some conversation ensued on the reasons for joy at the birth of a child. Mr. Alcott described a festival to be held on the birth of a child, emblematic of the causes of our joy in its birth, and suggested thoughts appropriate for that occasion.

Festival at Birth.

They all expressed great pleasure in his picture. He then returned to the subject, and asked, — How did the angel say the child should live ?

SEVERAL. He should be temperate, abstemious. (See Note 59.)

MR. ALCOTT. What does it mean by his being "filled with the Holy Ghost ?"

Idea of Holy Ghost.

GEORGE K. That he should be full of goodness, love, faith, truth.

MR. ALCOTT. What does Holy Ghost mean ?

LUCY. Here it means the word of God.

WILLIAM B. It means, he should believe in the word of God.

AUGUSTINE. Our spirits are the Holy Ghost.

FRANK. A man that has a great deal of truth and goodness is a holy ghost.

MR. ALCOTT. Are there any holy ghosts in Boston ?

FRANK. No *very* holy ghosts here.

ALEXANDER. Holy ghost means about the same as angel, but not so innocent.

JOHN B. God is the best Holy Ghost. Jesus is the next best.

ANDREW. John's having the holy ghost, means that he did not give up to his body.

EDWARD B. I think holy ghost there means God. But generally ghosts mean troubled spirits.

(Here some conversation ensued on popular superstitions, and some ghost stories were told. Mr. Alcott ended with saying, — But this child was not filled with such ghosts, but with pure thoughts, good affections, — a holy spirit.)

Spiritual
Culture.

MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by his "turning the hearts of the fathers to the children" ?

FRANKLIN. The children should turn the hearts of their fathers from idolatry by their goodness. (See Note 60.)

MR. ALCOTT. Are there any idolaters in Boston ?

AUGUSTINE. A great many. They worship money. (See Note 61.)

FRANKLIN. Gluttons are idolaters.

EMMA. Their bodies are their idols.

CHARLES. The spiritually minded may make idols of their spirits and neglect their bodies. (See Note 62.)

MR. ALCOTT. What is "the wisdom of the just" ?

LUCY. Spiritual beauty.

CHARLES. Knowledge of justice.

Intuition of
Conscience. MR. ALCOTT. How does Gabriel stand in
the presence of God ?

FRANK. That means to be good ; but I don't see how Gabriel could stand in God's presence, when he had made Zacharias dumb just because he did not believe him. (See Note 63.)

MR. ALCOTT. Perhaps Zacharias was made dumb, in order that he might not communicate his doubts to others. The paternal sentiment cannot be uttered, its sign is feeling ; it is inward.

How do feelings get into your minds ?

SEVERAL. God sends them.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you take them all ?

LUCY. No ; we are not good enough.

AUGUSTINE. We have not room enough for all.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you think your own spirit stands in the presence of God ?

(*Many held up hands.*) (See Note 64.)

When you do wrong — does it ?

EMMA. God sees us even then.

MR. ALCOTT. Do we see God then ?

WILLIAM B. No ; if we did, we should never do wrong.*

* This remark is very characteristic of the child who made it. His mind was, in many respects, of a precocious developement. His physical organization seemed to cast him early in life upon the religious sentiment, for happiness ; and he had become somewhat mature in religious experience. He was very serious in disposition, and had the germs of very fine reasoning powers, as will be remarked in much that he says. But an ardent temperament, together with his feeble physical organization, exposed him to great inequalities of spirits, and gave him great moral difficulties to master within himself. He was deeply sincere, and every one of his words may be depended upon as a perfect transcript of his mind for the time being. REC.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think that this vision was in the mind of Zacharias, and that no visible shape appeared to his eyes ?

EDWARD B. I do not believe mere imagination could make him dumb. (See Note 65.)

(Anecdotes were here told to show Edward B. that a mental condition was always one link in the chain of causes, that produced an outward effect.)

EDWARD B. Yes ; I understand now. And I think Zacharias did see the angel within his own spirit.

MR. ALCOTT read, — “After those days Elizabeth conceived.” What does conceive mean ?

Conception
of Spirit.

LUCY. She found out in her spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. It would not do for children to be born without their parents being prepared to take care of them. Mothers always have signs and feel disposed to keep hidden, or retired, and think about it ; and it is right they should, for it is a great thing to have the care of a child. (See Note 66.)

GEORGE K. It has been a very interesting conversation this morning.

MR. ALCOTT. How long have we been conversing ?

LUCY. I should think about half an hour.

MR. ALCOTT. Why does time seem to be destroyed while we talk ?

EMMA. Because we are not thinking of time.

LUCIA. Because we are in eternity.

MR. ALCOTT. Our subjects have but little to do with time. All who have been very much interested may rise.

(All rose smilingly.) (See Note 67.)

You seem to be deeply interested in this account of the preparation for birth, or the appearing of spirit to the external senses.

CONVERSATION VI.

ANNUNCIATION OF SPIRIT TO MATERNITY.

CHASTITY.

VI. EVIDENCE OF MATERNAL SENTIMENT.

Vision of Mary from the Sacred Text. — Maternity. — Purity of Body. — Heralds of Genius — Idea of Dreams. — Integrity of Dreams. — Origin of Disease. — Maternal Faith. — Perpetuity of Holiness. — Divine Instinct of Human Generation. — Angels of Conception. — Holiness of Maternity.

Mr. Alcott called the attention of the children to the subject, and then read the

VISION OF MARY.

LUKE i. 26-38.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Maternity. 26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

Nazareth. 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favored, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

* Dan. vii. 14.
Mic. iv. 7.

33 * And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Nazareth.

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age : and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

After reading this passage, Mr. Alcott asked the usual question.

CHARLES. I made a picture in my mind, of the angel's coming to Mary ; but I cannot describe it.

LEMUEL. I do not think Gabriel ought to have told Mary until after John was born, because John came to prepare the way.

Purity of Body. SAMUEL R. I do not know what was the use of John's coming to announce Jesus.

(*Mr. Alcott here remarked, that John's announcement of Jesus was a moral preparation. He described his ministry, as one of Temperance. To discipline and purify the body, was a natural preparation for the unfolding of the spirit. I wish I could have preserved this fine discourse. He ended with remarking, that great men were generally thus announced.*)

Heralds of Genius. WELLES. Did Socrates have a forerunner ?

MR. ALCOTT. Anaxagoras, (you see his bust over the book-case,) is thought to have prepared the way for Socrates, by teaching that God was Thought. Others had taught that God was Water, or Fire, or some material substance. None seem to have had the idea of spirit. (See Note 68.)

Idea of Visions
and Dreams.

ANDREW. In old times God spoke in dreams that came to pass. God told Mary in a dream that she was to have a son.

MR. ALCOTT. Does God speak in dreams now ?

ANDREW. No ; he has spoken enough in dreams in past times.

GEORGE K. And he has spoken by prophets, so that dreams are no longer necessary. Enough has been done and said to make people good if they will be. (See Note 69.)

MR. ALCOTT. Are people made good ?

GEORGE K. Some of them.

MR. ALCOTT. Have enough been made good ?

GEORGE K. No ; for enough would be all.

FRANKLIN. The Bible is now instead of visions.

WILLIAM B. We can think more. We have more thoughts and better ones, and do not need dreams.

CHARLES. We are better acquainted with our minds than they were.

EDWARD J. Our minds are like God ; so we do not need the dreams.

(Mr. Alcott here made some remarks on dreaming ; and spoke of a lady, whose conduct for the next day was foretold in a dream, in all its details, the night before ; and who believed the dream was sent for her good. A story was also told of a lunatic, who committed murder and arson because he dreamed a great many times, that God commanded him to make a burnt offering and sacrifice ; which he interpreted to mean the neighbouring church and its minister ; and how he was tried and condemned, but the execution was remitted on account of a general conviction that he was crazy, and how he lived in prison, very contentedly, the rest of his life.)

Integrity of
Dreams.

GEORGE K. God meant some harmless sacrifice and burnt offering. But that man was naughty and made it out so.

MR. ALCOTT. Was it right not to punish him ?

GEORGE K. It was right not to kill him, if he was crazy ; but to imprison him, where he could do no more mischief.

(The rest held up their hands.)

WILLIAM B. Mr. Alcott, I think that man was deceived on account of his own sinfulness ; and that no man, who is sinful, ought to be so very sure that his inward feelings are understood by him rightly. Zacharias, you know, had this self distrust, which arose from his knowing that he had sinned. He could not feel sure, even when the vision was really a true one.

MR. ALCOTT. 'Then you think visions are possible ?

WILLIAM B. Oh yes ! But only Jesus Christ could feel sure of all his visions, because he only knew that he was perfect. (See Note 70.)

(Mr. Alcott here spoke of insanity, as originating in want of temperance in the individual, or in his ancestors.)

Origin of
Disease.

EDWARD B. It says in the Bible, that the sins of fathers shall be visited on their children.

MR. ALCOTT. And they are visited in this manner ; sin produces disease ; diseases are inherited from generation to generation. (See Note 71.)

Joseph, what do you think of the reading ?

Maternal Faith.

JOSEPH. Mary ought to have believed the angel without asking any questions.

MR. ALCOTT. She asked in surprise, I think, not in doubt. Why was she called "highly favored" ?

CHARLES. Because she was to have a holy child.

LUCIA. Because she was good.

FRANK. Because her son was to be a good man.

EMMA. Good mothers all have good children.

LEMUEL and OTHERS. No ; my mother is good.

GEORGE K. She was highly favored because she loved, and her child was to love every body, and God.
(See Note 72.)

Perpetuity of Holiness. MR. ALCOTT. Why was he called, "Son of the Highest" ?

WILLIAM B. Because he never sinned.

MR. ALCOTT. Do the high never sin ?

WILLIAM B. The high in this world do, but not the high in the spiritual world.

MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by, "the throne of his father David" ? (See Note 73.)

CHARLES. A great deal of power. It does not mean a material throne.

MR. ALCOTT. What does it mean by saying, "of his kingdom shall be no end" ?

CHARLES. It is eternal, immortal. (See Note 74.)

MR. ALCOTT. Why was this child called the Son of God ?

EDWARD J. Because he was like God. Being like God is being his son.

EMMA. The holy spirit is the son of God.

AUGUSTINE. Jesus is the Son of God.

Divine Instinct of Human Generation. MR. ALCOTT. Such of you as think that the spirit, the power of God, was acting when you were beginning to BE, may rise.

(Half rose ; the rest said they did not understand the question.)

Such of you as think that when your fathers and mothers loved each other, and wanted a child of their own

to love, God was present and gave a spirit from himself, in answer to their prayer, may rise.

(*All rose.*) (See Note 75.)

MR. ALCOTT. Was Jesus' birth different from common births ?

(*A few held up hands.*)

Those who think there is something like his birth in every birth, may rise.

(*All the rest rose.*)

CHARLES. No angel appeared to my mother, but perhaps a thought came to her.

Angel of
Conception.

WELLES. I have not yet found out whether angels come in bodies or not.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you think about it ?

WELLES. I have always thought that angels were spirits in heaven, but had bodies when sent down on earth.

MR. ALCOTT. Who think angels have bodies, which are as much a part of their life as ours are ?

(*Some held up hands.*)

Was this angel an appearance to Mary's eyes ?

CHARLES and SUSAN. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Or was it a deep thought in her mind ?

THE REST. It was a thought.

ANDREW. Mary saw the angel with her spirit ; for the angel came into her spirit, and her imagination gave it a shape.

FREDERIC. When I have been sick I have seen all manner of shapes that my own imagination made.

AUGUSTINE. We are all angels in bodies.

MR. ALCOTT. Do the rest think so ?

(*All rose.*)

LUCIA. We were all angels when we were babies.

Holiness of
Maternity.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did the angel say to Mary, "The Lord is with thee" ?

GEORGE K. I don't know. The Lord is always with us.

ARNOLD. 'The Lord is with us when we are good.

AUGUSTINE. The Lord is with us when we are bad, or we could not live.

MR. ALCOTT. He then keeps us from destroying ourselves, as we should do if we did wrong continually. "In God we live and move and have our being." You seem to have been much interested to-day. I am glad these conversations please you so well. — On what subject have we been talking this morning ?

SEVERAL. Preparing for birth.

Sacredness
of Subject.

MR. ALCOTT. It is a subject upon which more should be said than has been. It should not be thought of, except with the purest and holiest feelings. I am glad to find that your associations regarding it are so pure and worthy.

CONVERSATION VII.

INCARNATION OF SPIRIT.

GESTATION.

VII. EVIDENCE OF MATERNAL SYMPATHY.

Interview between Mary and Elisabeth, from the Sacred Text. — Instinctive Joy. — Divine Instinct of Maternity. — Blessedness of Maternity. — Humility. — Ecstasy. — Quickening of the Infant Body. — Thanksgiving for Maternity. — Anticipation of Maternal duties.

Mr. Alcott remarked on the subject of the last conversation, and began with reading the

INTERVIEW BETWEEN MARY AND ELISABETH.

LUKE i. 39 – 56.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Hebron.

Sympathy.
of Juda ;

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elisabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among Women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed *is* she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

46 And Mary said,

My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Hebron.

* Isaiah li. 9.

† Ps. xxxiii. 10.

‡ 1 Sam. ii. 6.

§ Ps. xxxiv. 10.

|| Jer. xxxi. 3,
20.

¶ Gen. xvii. 19.
Ps. cxxxii. 11.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his hand-
maiden :

For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call
me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things ;
And holy is his name.

50 And his mercy is on them that fear him
From generation to generation.

51 * He hath showed strength with his arm ;

† He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of
their hearts.

52 ‡ He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats,
And exalted them of low degree.

53 § He hath filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, || in remembrance of
his mercy,

55 ¶ As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his
seed for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and
returned to her own house.

Mr. Alcott then asked, what does the word *Saluta-
tion* mean ?

Instinctive Joy. GEORGE K. 'Talk.

LUCY. Greeting.

CHARLES. Can we not salute a person angrily ?

SEVERAL. No ; salute means a welcome.

RECORDER. The Latin word *sal-u-te* means in health.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did Elisabeth feel so sure of
having a child, when Mary saluted her ?

GEORGE K. I suppose Mary told her of her vision.

FREDERIC. Elisabeth knew by Mary's countenance.

WILLIAM B. And by her whole manner.

Divine Instinct
of Maternity. MR. ALCOTT. What filled Elisabeth with
the Holy Ghost ?

CHARLES. She was glad to have a good
child ; that made her full of spirit. It was called a
holy spirit, because she was full of love, joy, hope, and
faith.

ALEXANDER. It made her spirit holy to see, by Mary's countenance, that she was to have such a child.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think Elisabeth's spirit was made holy by Mary's salutation being filled with so much gladness?

(All held up their hands.)

MR. ALCOTT. What is the expression of the countenance when a person is full of joy? (See Note 76.)

SEVERAL, simultaneously. Smiles. Glittering eyes. Joyfulness.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did Elisabeth speak "with a loud voice"?

LUCIA. Because she was glad.

MR. ALCOTT. Was it a rough, unpleasant voice?

LUCIA. No; it was sweet.

MR. ALCOTT. The voice has its meaning also.

Why was Mary called blessed?

AUGUSTINE. Because she was going to bring forth something blessed.

Blessedness of
Maternity.

JOHN B. The Son of God. (See Note 77.)

WELLES. Something hardly to be equalled.

MR. ALCOTT. What does blessed mean?

LUCIA. To be happy.

CHARLES. To have a particular feeling from God.

FRANK. Perfectness.

MR. ALCOTT. What does it mean by, "Blessed is the fruit"?

FRANK. Blessed is the child. (See Note 78.)

MR. ALCOTT. Why does Elisabeth ask, "Whence is it that the mother of my Lord should visit me?"

Humility.

WILLIAM B. She thought she was not so good as Mary, and that it was a great thing for so high a woman to come into her house.

FREDERIC. She thought it must be something very important, which could make her come.

MR. ALCOTT paraphrased the 44th verse thus, "The babe seemed to be in my arms."

Ecstasy. LUCIA. That was because she was so glad to see Mary.

(Lucy, Charles, and Lemuel described the pleasure of meeting their fathers after an absence.)

MR. ALCOTT. Did something within make you run up to your father, Lemuel, when you saw him?

LEMUEL. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Was it a holy spirit or an unholy one?

LEMUEL. A holy spirit, full of love.

EMMA. I never can speak at such times.

(All wanted to speak on this subject, but Mr. Alcott said there was not time.)

MR. ALCOTT. What does love make?

LUCIA. Obedience.

GEORGE K. Happiness.

FRANK. Holiness.

MR. ALCOTT. Does it not make something to love?
(See Note 79.)

(Some conversation, omitted here by the Recorder, is restored in the following note.)*

* MR. ALCOTT. The heart, when thus full of life and joy, is said to be quickened. Mothers feel this when they know children are to be given to them. The angel of love first tells a mother that a child is coming. Sometime after she has other signs.

Quickening of the Infant Body. "Blessed is she that believed, for there shall be a performance to her of those things told by the Lord." What does that mean?

(No answer.)

Resolution and faith, lead to success. Faith brings out what is planted in the spirit into the external world. ED.

MR. ALCOTT. What is, "magnifying the Lord" ?

(*No answer.*)

Is it doing right or saying words ?

SEVERAL. Doing right.

Thanksgiving
for Maternity.

LUCY. I think when we do right we magnify our own spirits.

LUCIA. We cannot magnify God ; we cannot even show all of God out in our spirits. (See Note 80.)

MR. ALCOTT. What does she mean by, "he has regarded the low estate of his handmaid" ?

LUCY. It means, she thought she was not good, and God had made her better.

MR. ALCOTT. What is low estate ?

ALEXANDER. Humbleness.

WILLIAM B. She had not outward riches.

LUCY. I thought low estate meant wickedness.

MR. ALCOTT. Why should "all generations call her blessed" ? (See Note 81.)

LUCIA. Because she was the mother of Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. And so they have. And here, nearly two thousand years after, in Boston, (very far from Judea,) a company of children are repeating those words, and calling her blessed ! These words are a quotation from the Hebrew prophets. It is a part of one of those prophetic poems that she quoted, because it seemed to apply to herself. And how well it does apply ! Why does it seem to her that "he hath showed strength with his arm" ?

WILLIAM B. Because Mary was nothing very great till she had this gift.

AUGUSTINE. Because God had sent Gabriel.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the "imagination of the proud" ?

LUCY. The love of earthly, worldly riches.

MR. ALCOTT. How had he "filled the hungry" ?

LUCIA. It was the hungry for spiritual food.

MR. ALCOTT read, "As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham." What had he said to Abraham?

LUCIA. He had said, "Count the stars; thy children shall become as numerous."

MR. ALCOTT. How long did Mary stay?

Anticipation of
Maternal Duties.

SEVERAL. Three months.

MR. ALCOTT. How do you suppose they passed their time?

MARTHA. In conversation about the angels, and about what their sons should be.

LUCIA. And about what their sons should do.

WILLIAM B. How they should take care of their childrens' spirits.

CHARLES. And how the Lord had blessed them.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think it was a happy three months?

LUCIA. I should think it would have passed quickly.

LUCY. I should think Mary would have stayed longer.

GEORGE K. I shouldn't; I think she would want to go home and see about her own house. (See Note 82.)

WILLIAM B. They thought of a mother's duties.

MR. ALCOTT. And they doubtless did as all mothers should before so great an event as the birth of a spirit on the earth. In our next conversation we shall come to the birth of John the Baptist.

CONVERSATION VIII.

NATIVITY OF SPIRIT.

FAMILY RELATION.

Birth and Naming of John the Baptist, from the Sacred Text. — Ideas of Birth-place and Birth. — Birth. — Sacredness of Birth. — Travail of Body with Spirit. — Emblems of Birth. — Naming of Spirit incarnate. — Influence of Nature on Imagination. — Analysis of Zacharias' Prophecy. — Emblems of John and Jesus. — Prejudice. — Subject.

Review. Mr. Alcott began by asking, What was our conversation upon the last time ?

CHARLES and OTHERS. The journey of Mary. The visit to her cousin Elisabeth. Their conversation.

Mr. Alcott then read

THE BIRTH AND NAMING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

LUKE i. 57 to the end.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 5. Julian Period, 4709.	Birth and Naming.	57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered : and she brought forth a son.
Hebron.	58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her ; and they rejoiced with her.	
	59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child ; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.	
	60 And his mother answered and said, Not so ; but he shall be called John.	
	61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.	
	62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.	
	63 And he asked for a writing-table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.	
	64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake and praised God.	

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Hebron.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them :
and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the
hill country of Judea.

66 And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their
hēarts, saying, What manner of child shall this be ! And
the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy
Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68 Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel ;

For he hath visited and redeemed his people,

* Ps. cxxxii.
17.

69 * And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us,
In the house of his servant David ;

† Jer. xxiii. 6.
xxx. 10.

70 † As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets,
Which have been since the world began :

71 That we should be saved from our enemies,
And from the hand of all that hate us :

72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers,
And to remember his holy covenant ;

‡ Gen. xxii. 16.

73 ‡ The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us,

That we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies,
Might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him,
All the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the
Highest,

For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to pre-
pare his ways ;

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people,
By the remission of their sins,

78 Through the tender mercy of our God ;

Whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the
shadow of death ;

To guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and
was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

Idea of Birth-
place and Birth.

Now what came into your minds while I
was reading ?

JOSIAH. The deserts seemed to me a great
space covered with sand, like that in the hour-glass.
The sun was shining on it, and making it sparkle.
There were no trees. John was there alone.

EDWARD J. I thought the deserts meant woods, with paths here and there.

LUCY. I thought of a space covered with grass and some wild flowers, and John walking about.

CHARLES. I thought of a prairie.

ALEXANDER. I thought of a rocky country.

AUGUSTINE. I thought of a few trees scattered over the country, with bees in the trunks.

GEORGE K. I thought of a place without houses, excepting John's ; and flowers, trees, and bee-hives.

Birth. MR. ALCOTT. I should like to hear all your pictures, but as I have not time, you may tell me now what interested you most ? (See Note 83.)

CHARLES. 'The prophecy of Zacharias.

LUCIA. Elisabeth's saying the child's name must be John.

LUCY. Zacharias finding his speech again.

ANDREW. 'The birth of the child.

MR. ALCOTT. How was it ?

ANDREW. I thought, one night, as Elizabeth was sleeping, an angel brought her a child, and made her dream she had one, and she awoke and it was lying at her side.

WILLIAM B. I think he was born like other children except that Elisabeth had visions. (See Note 84.)

GEORGE K. I thought God sent an angel to give her a child. It cried as soon as it came and waked up its mother to give it something to eat.

LUCIA. When John was first born, his mother did not know it, for he was born in the night ; but she found it by her side in the morning.

CHARLES. Elisabeth must have had some vision as well as Zacharias, or how could she know the child was theirs ? Zacharias could not speak.

NATHAN. I don't see why John came in the night. All other children come in the day.

Sacredness
of Birth.

MR. ALCOTT. No ; more frequently in the night. God draws a veil over these sacred events, and they ought never to be thought of except with reverence. 'The coming of a spirit is a great event. It is greater than death. It should free us from all wrong thoughts. (See Note 85.)

Travail of Body
with Spirit.

What is meant by "delivered"?

WILLIAM B. She delivered her child to Zacharias.

OTHERS. No ; God delivered the child to Elisabeth.

CHARLES. Elisabeth's thoughts made the child's soul, and when it was fairly born she was delivered from the anxiety of the thought.*

Emblems of
Birth.

MR. ALCOTT. You may give me some emblems of birth.

ALEXANDER. Birth is like the rain. It comes from heaven.

LUCIA. I think it is like a small stream coming from a great sea ; and it runs back every night, and so becomes larger and larger every day, till at last it is large enough to send out other streams.

LEMUEL. Lives streamed from the ocean first ; now smaller streams from the larger ones, and so on.

SAMUEL R. Birth is like the rising light of the sun ; the setting is death.

* MR. ALCOTT. Yes, the deliverance of the spirit is the first thing. And I am glad to find, that you have so strong an impression of that. The physiological facts, sometimes referred to, are only a sign of the spiritual birth. You have seen the rose opening from the seed with the assistance of the atmosphere ; this is the birth of the rose. It typifies the bringing forth of the spirit, by pain, and labor, and patience. (See Note 86.) ED.

ANDREW. God's wind came upon the ocean of life, and washed up the waters a little into a channel, and that is birth. They run up farther, and that is living.

MR. ALCOTT. I should like to have all your emblems but have not time. There is no adequate sign of birth in the outward world, except the physiological facts that attend it, with which you are not acquainted.

Why did they call the child John ?

Naming of
Spirit Incarnate.

SEVERAL. Because the angel told them to.

RECORDER. The Hebrew word *John* means gift of God. They felt he was so kindly given that they called him Gift. (See Note 87.)

MR. ALCOTT. Why did the people marvel ?

FRANKLIN and OTHERS. Because it was the custom to name children from relations.

JOSEPH. And the people did not know that the angel had told them to name him John.

MR. ALCOTT. What loosed Zacharias' tongue ?

EDWARD J. The power of God.

ANOTHER. His faith.

LUCIA. The child was born, and it was said that he should speak then.

CHARLES. It was promised that he should speak.

FRANK. Because God did not want to make the angel tell a lie.

FRANKLIN. It was a reward of his obedience.

WILLIAM B. He gave up a natural desire to name him from himself.

Influence of
Nature on
Imagination.

MR. ALCOTT. Why was it "noised abroad" ?

SEVERAL. It was a great event to have a child born from such old parents.

MR. ALCOTT. And in the country, especially a hilly country, the people being imaginative, seem quite disposed to look beyond external things. They are apt

to think singular events typify, or are a sign of, something supernatural. (See Note 88.) They wondered what kind of child this would be.

Analysis of the
Prophecy of
Zacharias. How had the Lord "visited his people"?
(See Note 89.)

LEMUEL. He had visited their spirits.

FRANKLIN. By sending John to tell that Jesus was coming.

MR. ALCOTT. What is it to redeem a people?

LUCIA. To make them good.

EDWARD B. To save them from sin.

MR. ALCOTT. A man who loves to eat and drink, an intemperate man, a passionate man, is a slave to the body; and when his spirit is released from his body, by renewing thoughts, that withdraw his attention from his body, he is redeemed, just as a prisoner taken out of a dungeon is said to be redeemed from captivity. (See note 90.) What is meant by "horn of salvation"?

CHARLES. A great deal of mercy.

MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by "house of David"?

FRANKLIN. Jesus was a descendant of David.

MR. ALCOTT. What enemies are mentioned here?

CHARLES. Spiritual enemies.

MR. ALCOTT. What fathers are meant here?

CHARLES. All good people who went before.

MR. ALCOTT. What is "holy covenant"?

(No answer.)

It is a promise, on condition of holiness, of giving blessings. And the oath?

(Here it was found necessary to discriminate between profane swearing and judicial oaths, which they had confounded. (See Note 91.)

Is there any such promise to us, as was made by that covenant?

CHARLES. It is made to all good people.

MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by "prophet of the highest"?

CHARLES. Announcer of Jesus Christ.

MR. ALCOTT. What is it to "give knowledge of salvation"?

CHARLES. To tell us how to be good, and forgive our sins that are repented of.

MR. ALCOTT. What is "day-spring"?

CHARLES. Righteousness, wisdom.

MR. ALCOTT. What is it to "sit in darkness"?
(See Note 92.)

CHARLES. To be wicked.

MR. ALCOTT. If John was the day-spring,
Emblems of John and Jesus. who was the risen sun?

ALL. Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. What is it to "wax strong in spirit"?

CHARLES. To stand fast by God.

FRANKLIN. To grow better and better.

MR. ALCOTT reads. "And he was in the deserts."

CHARLES. In the country; at his father's house.

EDWARD B. Why are Jews held in such
Prejudice. contempt, when Jesus was born a Jew.

FRANKLIN. Because they killed Jesus, and said,
"his blood be on us and our children."

EDWARD B. And Jews are mean, avaricious.

(Mr. Alcott explained the last characteristics by the
oppressions they had suffered.)

MR. ALCOTT. Who think it is a wicked prejudice?

WELLES. It is a right prejudice.

ALL. There are no right prejudices.

MR. ALCOTT. What has been the subject
Subject. of this conversation?

NATHAN. Putting spirits into bodies.

MR. ALCOTT. And the nativity, or birth of spirit in the flesh.

CONVERSATION IX.

MARRIAGE OF SPIRIT.

CONJUGAL RELATION.

Vision of Joseph, from the Sacred Text. — Idea of Birth. — Constancy. —
Conjugal Love. — Idea of Angels. — Spirit Incarnate. — Emmanuel. —
Apotheosis of Humanity. — Divinity of Spirit.

Mr. Alcott began the conversation by reading the

VISION OF JOSEPH.

MATT. i. 18 to the end.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Nazareth.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on
Constancy. this wise : When as his mother Mary was
espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was
found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not
willing to make her a public example, was minded to put
her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold the
angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying,
Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary
thy wife : for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy
Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his
name JESUS : for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled
which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

* Isa. vii. 14.

23 * Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring
forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which
being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel
of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife :

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-
born son : and he called his name JESUS.

After the reading Mr. Alcott asked what interested them most.

Idea of Birth. JOSIAH. I thought most of Jesus' being born.*

EDWARD C. I thought I saw Jesus come down from heaven, when you read.

WILLIAM B. When mothers have children they are always good, better than at other times. Mary's vision had made her good — better than other people, and so her child was better.

LUCY. I liked the angel's appearing to Joseph and telling him not to be afraid.

SAMUEL T. It was beautiful where the angel came to Joseph in a dream.

AUGUSTINE. The birth was so peculiar, because the child was different, more holy than other children. If such a child should come again, there would be the same signs and wonders, that the father and mother might get ready to take care of it. (See Note 94.)

ALEXANDER. The angel came, so that Mary and Joseph might become good ; so that they could teach their child, lest he should have faults.

JOHN B. I imagined the angel, but I cannot put my idea into words.

Constancy. FRANK. The angel ought to have told Joseph that it would be wrong for him not to marry Mary, after he had promised to. (See Note 95.)

* MR. ALCOTT. And what did you think being born was?
 JOSIAH. It is to take up the body from the earth. The spirit comes from heaven, and takes up the naughtiness out of other people, which makes other people better. And these naughtinesses, put together, make a body for the child ; but the spirit is the best part of it. (See Note 93.) ED.

MR. ALCOTT. That is just what the angel did tell him.

EDWARD B. I thought of Joseph lying on a splendid bed in a splendid room. And the angel had on a white glistening robe, flowing round his feet, and a golden girdle round his waist, and a glittering crown and wand, and flaxen hair over his shoulders, and he told Joseph to keep his promise.

RECORDER. How could a poor carpenter in Nazareth, have a splendid room ?

EDWARD B. An angel would not come into a poor looking room. It would not be appropriate.

RECORDER. Do they never visit poor men's huts ?

(After some conversation, Edward seemed to think, that such outward splendors were not particularly appropriate to angels, at least, upholstery.)

MR. ALCOTT. Was this angel in Joseph's mind or out of it ?

EDWARD B. There was a real angel, but different persons' imaginations would have shaped him differently. I believe there are different kinds of angels : — Some are to be born as men ; some are ministering angels, who had lived in bodies once ; some who like Gabriel, have never had a body, and never will have one. These are called visiting angels.

EDWARD J. I wonder why the angel did not tell Joseph to marry Mary before ?

MR. ALCOTT. Did he not tell him what to do, as soon as he began to inquire what he should do ? *

* EDWARD J. I should think the father would know about the child's coming, as soon as the mother.

MR. ALCOTT. Mothers always know first. (See Note 96.)

EDWARD J. Yes ; because they have most to do with the children. ED.

GEORGE K. I thought about Joseph's kindness to Mary. I think that he always let her choose about things, what they should have for dinner, and such things (See Note 97); and when he had any thing, he always gives it to her, and would go any where to carry things when she asked him to. I think Joseph had a good room, because he was a carpenter, and could make every thing; but I think an angel would be more likely to go to a poor person's house, because the poor are generally happier.

MR. ALCOTT. Do any of the rest of you think as George does, that the poor are the happiest.

(All held up their hands but Edward B.) (See Note 98.)

CHARLES. I was interested in the angel's coming to tell Joseph that he need not fear to marry Mary.

MR. ALCOTT. Why do you think Joseph doubted about it?

CHARLES. Because he thought Mary was too holy for him, and he did not want to have the child be the son of a carpenter's wife, lest people should not think so much of him.

ANDREW. I think the reason the angel told him to marry Mary was, because she was going to have such a holy child, who would make him a better man.

LUCIA. I thought of Joseph walking in the fields, where there was grass and flowers. He was thinking about marrying Mary, and he lay down and went to sleep, and an angel came, with glistening hair and robes, and a dove on each shoulder, and told him to marry Mary.

MR. ALCOTT. Was he alone?

LUCIA. Yes; there was no other person holy enough to know any thing about it.

MR. ALCOTT. How did the angel look to you?

LUCIA. As small as an infant, and had a smile like a child, and his words sounded like music.

Idea of Angels. MR. ALCOTT. Do you generally think of angels as infants?

ALL. I do ! I do ! (See Note 99.)

Spirit Incarnate. EMMA. I was interested in the name "God with us." I thought it meant that Jesus was God, though on earth.

CHARLES. I think it means that God will be with the parents of Jesus, because God's spirit is in Jesus, and so with them.

MR. ALCOTT. Is God's spirit always in Children?

CHARLES. God's spirit was in him more than in any other ; because he was more pure.

ANDREW. I think it means that God had faith in them all.

JOHN B. It means that God was in the child and his mother.

EDWARD J. I thought of greatness and goodness in Jesus Christ ; and that Jesus Christ would be with men. So he was God with us.

EDWARD B. It means Jesus was more like God than any one else.

Emmanuel. Do the words Jesus and Emmanuel mean the same?

MR. ALCOTT. One of the prophets, speaking of a great era, a renovation of things by the spirit, said it would bring God among men. And Matthew quoted these words, saying, that they were fulfilled, when Jesus was born, for he was a God among men. (See Note 100.)

GEORGE K. He was called God because he was so much like God, and was with his disciples, so he was Emmanuel.

MR. ALCOTT. What disciples was he with?

GEORGE K. Luke and John and those ; but he is spiritually with all good men. It says, in a book which I have at home, —

“ If I could find some cave unknown,
Where human feet had never trod,
Yet there I should not be alone,
On every side there would be God.”

JOSIAH. I think Emmanuel means, that God was so very good as to send Jesus to make men repent, and so when he came, it was said that God was with us.

Apotheosis of
Humanity. FRANK. If you call Jesus God, and God God, I think there would be two Gods, and that is the same as worshipping statues.

AUGUSTINE. I think that Jesus and God are not two but one. If we were to say Jesus, or to say God, we should mean the same thing, only Jesus is God in a body.

JOHN B. I think the same.

GEORGE K. God is God ; Jesus is godlike. (See Note 101.)*

Divinity of
Spirit. MR. ALCOTT. Is there any one word which may express this idea of God with us ?

* It will be observed that Mr. Alcott does not decide between such differing views. All opinions seem to be represented by the different children, and there is something characteristic in the views which they take. Very few seem indoctrinated at home. The same original difference of mind, which originates different creeds, originates them here. They have formed their own creeds ; and these sometimes differ from those of their parents. Mr. Alcott leads them to express their views, and then leaves these to make their own impression, confident that truth will prevail in the end. REC.

AUGUSTINE. Spirit.

ANDREW. Conscience.

FRANK. Immortality.

MR. ALCOTT. Is God with us ?

(*All held up hands.*) (See Note 102.)

How many think our life is God ?

AUGUSTINE. God makes our life.

MR. ALCOTT. How many think our love is God ?

GEORGE K. Some of God, not all.

MR. ALCOTT. How many think our faith is God ?

AUGUSTINE. The spirit is flowing over us, and what we get is God in us.

MR. ALCOTT. Is our body God in any sense ?

GEORGE K. It is God's work. (See Note 103.)

Subject. MR. ALCOTT. Our next conversation will be on the birth of Jesus, which point in his history we have now reached. We have seen what preparations God makes in order to bring a spirit into the world, and make it visible to our eyes, by clothing it in flesh.

CONVERSATION X.

ADVENT OF SPIRIT.

INFANCY.

The Birth of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Ideas, Images, and Emblems of Birth. — Theories of Birth. — Release from Evil. — Retribution of Conscience. — Emblem of Retribution. — Spiritual Blessedness. — Maternal Solitude. — Joy at Birth. — Ideas of Paraphrase.

Mr. Alcott remarked on the taxing, and read

THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

LUKE ii. 1-20.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Bethlehem.

Birth.

1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (*And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 6.
Julian Period,
4709.

Bethlehem.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you ; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

He read this twice (as they requested it a second time) and then asked for their thoughts.

Ideas, Images,
and Emblems
of Birth.

JOHN D. I saw the mother standing by a manger, with a little child in it. I have seen a picture of it.

JOSEPH. I saw the angels coming to the shepherds.

FRANKLIN. I saw the picture of the whole : — the people going up to be taxed all along the road ; the manger and child and mother ; the angels coming to the shepherds ; and the angels going away.

AUGUSTINE. Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, was dressed differently from the other angels. He had stars on his robe, which was blue.

MR. ALCOTT. Why was he drest differently ?

AUGUSTINE. Because he brought a new kind of message. Blue is an emblem of faith.

MR. ALCOTT. Is not green like faith ?

AUGUSTINE. No ; green is more like fear. Mary was sitting on a pile of straw, and the baby, clothed in white, was in a stall. It had hazel eyes. There were cows in the other stalls.

ALEXANDER. I saw the angel coming to the shepherds. The sky was black ; but there was one red spot, out of which the angels came. The first angel had a crown on. The baby was in a manger, and there were cows each side of him.

WELLES. The sky seemed to me clear blue. The first angel was the largest, and he had a crown on, and there was a long line of smaller angels, clothed in white, following. Then I saw the shepherds going and finding Jesus in a large place full of hay. He was lying high, and Joseph and Mary are standing near, and looking at him, and smiling because they are glad to have him.

JOHN B. I see the manger. The baby was dressed in white, with stars all over his dress ; the stars are a sign of love. The stable was not very large, and cattle are there. There was a building close by where there were a good many people — some standing outside and trying to get in. But it is too full.

LEMUEL. There was a large house and barn ; Joseph and Mary are on the hay, and the baby is in the manger. There are angels coming down just in sight afar off, and the light about them shines into the barn and wakes up the cattle. The angels are dressed in satin with diamonds.

GEORGE B. I saw the angels dressed in green.

JOSIAH. I think it was rather a high part of the barn, and a child was lying in the midst of the crowd,

and there was a ray of light on its forehead, that lighted up the whole barn. And an angel was sitting on a cloud above, dressed in purple, with a sceptre and with a hat and feathers of purple, and there were other angels flying in and out, singing goodwill; and far off on a hill were shepherds, and there were little bits of angels flying round, and there was music playing, as if it were all the flutes and all the harps in the whole world playing together. The chief light was on the barn and on the hill.

MR. ALCOTT. Was there light on the barn outside?

JOSIAH. Oh yes! and, Mr. Alcott, I can see the watchmen of the city sitting, and the battlements, and the travellers stopping and asking the watchmen, what all this light means.

FRANK. I don't see how there could be a cloud in a barn.

JOSIAH. Oh! the barn was as high as this room; and the cloud was as high as that stove funnel. It was a pink cloud, such as we often see at sunset.

MR. ALCOTT. Why do you think this child was laid in a barn?

JOSIAH. Oh! because he was so good, he could not be laid in a handsome bed like others!

MR. ALCOTT. Why is it not, as it was with Jesus, when all babes are born?

JOSIAH. Because he was wiser and better and gooder.

MR. ALCOTT. What if there should be just such another child born?

JOSIAH. Why, then something of the same kind would take place I suppose, though not exactly the same things.

ANDREW. I see a little baby in a barn about as large as this room; and the baby is on a hayloft in one corner, and a crowd of people are at the door. The

*Angel!
dressed in
purple
with a hat
and feathers
of purple*

baby has a pink and purple robe, with a ring on his finger.

MR. ALCOTT. Where did the ring come from ?

ANDREW. His heavenly father put it on because he was pleased with him. The angels came in a long curve line which reached from the sky to the place where the angel stood who spoke to the shepherds, and there seemed to be more angels still behind.

(He described their dresses.)

EDWARD J. I think the angels were dressed in sky. They had feathers and diamonds on their heads. Those angels who are singing are in a thing that keeps them all together, and have harps ; and the angel of silence is there besides.* Jesus is dressed in sky too. Mr. Alcott, I made up some of this while I was telling it. I did not think it all when you were reading.

HALES. I like to think of the shepherds going home from seeing the child.

NATHAN. I think of the baby lying in the stall, and a lamp overhead, and a great many people looking at him and smiling, because they are glad he is come.

FREDERIC. I thought of the hill and the angels coming down ; the shepherds were great stout men.

(I lost the rest of this picture, but remember it was quite unique for its rustic simplicity and good sense.)

EDWARD C. I think of shepherds sitting with their crooks, and the lambs all about them in the grass.

SAMUEL T. I think of the baby lying up there and his mother.

EMMA. The reason of the light is, that goodness sheds light.

* In Mr. Alcott's school-room is an " Angel of Silence " in a plaster cast.

LUCIA. I think the angels were standing on a cloud ; and there were three or four little baby angels. The older angels had on white garments figured with lilies and roses. The sheep were under a tree. The angels sung ; but the angel of silence played on a harp and did not sing. Gabriel had a rod with a star on it, and he told them Jesus was born. As soon as Gabriel had said this, the angels began to sing to their harps. In the inn there was a very small bed, which they gave to Mary to put in the stall for the baby to lie on. It was just large enough for Jesus. Jesus had blue eyes, and a white robe, with stars on it, and the stars looked down from the sky into the window. And Mary had a plume that she was waving over him. The angels had no crowns on. I think that would have spoiled the whole, it would have been so earthly — they had wreaths of flowers.

EMMA. I think Mary was bending over Jesus and pressing the hay down, lest it should get into his eyes.

LUCIA. The angels, I think, took care of the sheep, while the shepherds went to Bethlehem. And angels were flying round the barn where Jesus was. Between the hill of the shepherds and the barn was a plain, covered with flowers, and a brook ran through it.

WILLIAM B. I thought of a road and a tavern on one side. Just behind was a very large barn ; and the tavern was full, and they went into the stable and cleared one manger, and clothed the child in some old dirty rags. (See Note 104.) And the mother was laid down and held the child up in a standing posture. The shepherds brought young lambs as presents to Jesus. When the shepherds told of Christ's birth in the city, all the bells were rung, and the people hurraed, but not boisterously, that a king was born. In the next stall to Jesus there was an ass, and when the ass saw Jesus, he

ran out of his own stall, and laid down before Jesus' stall.

MR. ALCOTT. Why should they take ragged clothes ?

WILLIAM B. They were poor, and taken by surprise ; besides, such clothes were emblematic of his earthly state.

MR. ALCOTT. Why were lambs brought ?

WILLIAM B. They are emblems of innocence.

MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by the prostrate ass ?

WILLIAM B. The ass knew the truth. You know animals have a kind of instinct.

RECORDER. Why should the ragged clothes be dirty ? that seems to me very disagreeable.

WILLIAM B. Why, that has a meaning, but I cannot express it.

EDWARD B. I thought of the shepherds receiving the tidings, sitting on an eminence ; and the flocks lying about on the ground, and the sky opened, and the light shone all round many miles, but not as far as Bethlehem. And an angel came down, not like the other angels that had come, but a smaller one, with a pink and white robe, and a plain gold girdle, and a gold band on his head. The other angels that came after, had no bodies, but only heads and wings — golden wings. And after they had told the shepherds, they went back and heaven closed. Then the shepherds went to Bethlehem ; and angels followed, who were invisible to the people until they got into the barn, where they could be seen. And the people of the inn could not get near the barn, because there was an angelic influence that kept them away, for they were not worthy.

LUCY. I was interested in the angels' coming. They brought Jesus in a chariot. He brought with him a bible clasped with diamonds. He had diamonds on his head. Mary kissed him.

Theories of
Birth.

MR. ALCOTT. Do the rest think Jesus was brought by the angels ?

JOSIAH. I don't know how he came.

NATHAN. Mary carried him into the barn, but I do not know where she got him.

LEMUEL. The angels could not bring his body.

FRANK. A carriage and horses from the sky brought the body.

(The rest thought angels brought him except Edward B.)

MR. ALCOTT. Do any of you think you were delivered by angels to your mothers ?

LUCIA and OTHERS. The spirit was, but not the body.

EMMA. The body was in the spirit. After angels bring the spirit, the body grows out of it, as the rose opens out of the bud.

WILLIAM B. The mother has something to do with making the body.

SEVERAL. So I should think.

Release from
Evil.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did the shepherds say they had "glad tidings" ?

ALEXANDER. Because he was the Saviour.

EMMA. Of our spirits.

FRANKLIN. From our sins.

EDWARD B. The Jews thought he would be a saviour from the Romans.

MR. ALCOTT. The tidings were "to all people." How ?

LEMUEL. Because he was good, and goodness will stay always.

MR. ALCOTT. Does evil always stay ?

Retribution of
Conscience. ONE. No.

What is the effect of sin on our spirits ?

EDWARD. J. Hell.

MR. ALCOTT. What does that word signify.

EDWAAD. J. Fire and brimstone.

MR. ALCOTT. Such fire as is in our grate, or does fire signify something else ?

EDWARD J. I think it is the fire that burns our spirits.

MR. ALCOTT. What is this fire ?

EDWARD J. Horror.

FRANKLIN. 'The punishment of conscience.

GEORGE B. Anger is hell.

ALEXANDER. Revenge is hell.

LUCY E. Remorse is hell.

LUCIA. A great reproach of conscience, but not a little reproach, is hell. (See Note 105.)

MR. ALCOTT. 'Those who think there is a place called hell, where there is fire like that in the grate, hold up your hands.

(*Not one.*)

Now those who think this word, (which you have found for yourselves,) is the sign of a state of mind, signify it.

(*All rose.*)

JOSIAH. Hell is a valley, I think, where they breathe evil spirits and writho.

MR. ALCOTT. An outward valley, or — ?

JOSIAH. A sign of naughtiness. Mr. Alcott, I have not been in that valley of hell for several days.

MR. ALCOTT. Well, I am glad of it. We may say then that Jesus came to save us from wrong states of mind ; from breathing in evil spirits as Josiah says. (See Note 106.)

Why did the angels sing "Glory to God in the highest" ?

Spiritual
Blessedness.

WELLES. Because Jesus was good.

ALEXANDER. And "highest" is the emblem of holy.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did they sing, "On earth peace"?

WILLIAM B. Because peace would be made in the world by what he taught. (See Note 107.)

WELLES. I think it means peace of conscience.

EMMA. How beautiful it would be if no one ever did wrong!

WELLES. If it had not been for Adam—

MR. ALCOTT. If it had not been for Welles—and for Mr. Alcott—and for all imperfect human creatures!!

LUCIA. If there were no wicked ones there would be no state prisons.

EDWARD B. No incendiaries nor pickpockets.

JOHN B. No murders, no wars.

MR. ALCOTT. There would be "good will towards men."

AUGUSTINE. Men would be kind to one another.

EMMA. They would say "I will not do wrong."

FRANKLIN. And be generous.

Maternal Solicitude. MR. ALCOTT. "And Mary pondered these things in her heart."

EDWARD J. What does "ponder" mean?

MR. ALCOTT. To weigh, think about, consider what meaning is hidden.

EDWARD J. She pondered in her heart, because Jesus was her son.

Joy at Birth. MR. ALCOTT. Was there joy when you were born?

(*All said yes.*)

Do you think any of you will prove Saviours, even to one poor ignorant soul?

LUCY. I guess Josiah and Emma will.

MR. ALCOTT. And why not Lucy, and Welles, and every one of you? Why not joy in heaven when you were born, and angels sing? (See Note 108.)

(All smiled.)

Ideas of
Paraphrase.

MR. ALCOTT. This passage needs no paraphrase. What is a paraphrase?

SEVERAL. Thoughts put into words, into any person's words.

JOSIAH. Putting sense into words. For instance, if I wanted to paraphrase the Bible, I should say — There was a good man whose name was God, and he sent another good man whose name was Jesus.

ANOTHER. Paraphrasing is telling God's meaning.

GEORGE K. You paraphrase when you change the large words into words small enough for us to understand.

JOHN D. When you read a story, you change the words into your own.

WILLIAM C. Taking other words for the same thoughts.

(Every scholar answered in like manner. All had the idea.)

MR. ALCOTT. Some people think it wrong to paraphrase the Bible, because the person who paraphrases may misunderstand, and use wrong words, or put a false sense. There is danger of this. But do you think there is so much danger of my doing so, as of your missing the true meaning without the paraphrase?

(No ! was the general answer.)

When I paraphrase I do not put better words. The Bible itself has usually the best expression, but I sometimes use other and plainer words; and now

tell me, How many of you like to have me paraphrase, and understand the sense better ?

(All held up hands.)

ONE. Every lesson is more interesting than the last !

MR. ALCOTT. I am glad that your interest continues as we proceed. The subjects become more and more interesting. In our next conversation we shall speak of the consecration in the temple at Jerusalem.

CONVERSATION XI.

CONSECRATION OF SPIRIT TO SELF RENEWAL.

RELIGION.

Description of the Temple. — Consecration in the Temple, from the Sacred Text. — Naming and Blessing. — Pictures of the Consecration. — Self-Control. — Self-Sacrifice. — Emblems. — Inspiration. — Spiritual Triumph. — Temperance. — Self-Renewal. — Spiritual Growth.

Mr. Alcott began the conversation by reading a description of the Jewish Temple. He spoke of one of Raphael's Cartoons, representing the beautiful gate of the temple, (late-ly exhibited), and which many of the children had seen. He then read the

CONSECRATION IN THE TEMPLE.

LUKE ii. 21-39.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Temple at
Jerusalem.

* Exod. xiii. 2.
Numb. xviii.
15.

† Levit. xii.
2, 6.

Naming and
Blessing.

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, Joseph called his name JESUS, which was so named

of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, * Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to † that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost *was* upon him.

26 And it *was* revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Temple at
Jerusalem.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple : and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word :

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people ;

32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the *fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against,

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser : she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity ;

37 And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

At their request he read this lesson twice, and explained the law of Moses respecting purification and consecration of children.

Pictures of the
Consecration.

MR. ALCOTT. Now what have you in your minds ?

EDWARD C. The turtle-doves, but I do not know what they were for.

JOSIAH. I had a picture of the christening. (See Note 109.)

(He described the temple with ornaments of gold ; the priests' dresses ; Simeon with a beard and long robe, holding the child up on one arm, and raising the other to heaven, — kneeling, and with little hair on his head ; Anna, very young, stretching out both hands thanking God.)

MR. ALCOTT. Let us not have so many of these pictures to-day ; we had a great many last time ; let us have more thoughts and fewer images.

LEMUEL. I thought the temple was as large as the state house, and there was an altar and knife laying on it, with a pearl handle and golden blade ; the priest had the child and Mary and Joseph were kneeling.

MR. ALCOTT. You are thinking of the circumcision, though I did not dwell on that.

FRANK. I imagined the temple and the child standing on the altar. Joseph had on a gold striped long gown, and Mary had a silver striped gown, and a pearl on her head. The floor was covered with apples, and things to be sacrificed.

AUGUSTINE. I imagined the temple was a good deal like this temple, and had one room larger than this. The altar was mahogany, with steel on the top, to keep it from being burned. There was a knife with a golden carved handle and silver blade. The two turtle-doves were standing on the altar, waiting for the priest to offer them up. And there was a pulpit, with a minister in it, reading out of a book. Mary and Joseph were before the altar, looking happy, and thinking about what the priest was reading. Simeon had the child and was caressing him. And they all had white caps on. There was a congregation of people sitting behind as in a common church. The sacrifice was made with sweet smelling wood.

MR. ALCOTT. Can you not refrain from these elaborate pictures? I prefer to have the thoughts which the reading suggests.

EDWARD J. I saw Joseph and Mary carry the pigeons and lay them on the altar; and the priest took a knife and killed them, and offered them. Simeon had Jesus, and was sitting down praying; and Anna the prophetess was praying.

MR. ALCOTT. Did you like to hear the reading?

EDWARD J. I like to hear every thing in the Bible.

WILLIAM B. I thought of Mary going into the temple, with one hand up to her eyes, and her baby in the other. She was thinking what her child was going to be, and how she should educate it, and Joseph was thinking the same things, and the Priest was thinking what great things the child was going to do.

ALEXANDER. I only had a picture.

MR. ALCOTT. We will omit it.

WELLES. I had thoughts, but I cannot express them, about the priests in the pulpit, and the offering of the doves.

(Several had pictures also, and were omitted.)

FREDERIC. William B. expressed all my thoughts.

EDWARD B. I cannot separate my thoughts from the picture.

MR. ALCOTT. If you think there are thoughts mingled with your picture, you may give it.

EDWARD B. The temple was four times as large as this room, and the altar was about a quarter as large. The priest had a large knife, and cut the child a little; but Jesus did not cry as other children would have done, because God gave him power to bear it. There was nobody in the temple but the parents; and Simeon and Anna. Simeon said he could now lay his head down in peace, because Jesus had come. He knew he had come to the spirits of men,

while other people thought he was to come to drive out the Romans — a great warrior and conqueror.

Self-Control. MR. ALCOTT. Was he not a conqueror ?
EDWARD B. Only over spiritual enemies.

MR. ALCOTT. What spiritual enemies ?

EDWARD B. Revenge, and anger, and —

MR. ALCOTT. Impatience ?

EDWARD B. Impatience is not a sin.

MR. ALCOTT. Who else think Impatience is not a sin ?

(Almost all held up hands.) (See Note 110.)

But is not Impatience the beginning of anger ?

(They agreed and said it was wrong, except Charles.)

CHARLES. I am only impatient because other people are, and I do not think impatience is a sin. (See Note 111.)

(Some personal conversation followed.)

LEMUEL. God did not give us so much patience as he did Jesus Christ.

MR. ALCOTT. Did Jesus do any thing to get it ?

LEMUEL. He had it at first.

MR. ALCOTT. Did he do any thing to keep it ?

LEMUEL. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you do any thing to keep yours ?

LEMUEL. No, not much. (See Note 112.)

Self-Sacrifice. LUCIA. I thought when Jesus was coming to the temple, he was borne by his parents, who seemed to be like servants to him. When they carried him into the temple, Simeon spread out his arms and took him, and blessed God, and Jesus, and the parents. So did Anna. There was a large altar, and wood burning on it ; and the two pigeons were just dead, and put upon the fire. And the priest took a long sharp knife, and cut the child a little, but he did not cry.

MR. ALCOTT. You seem to think that Jesus began to teach patience at eight days old, by not crying when he was hurt? What is meant by the cutting?

CHARLES. It showed that it was of small consequence, whether the body was hurt or not.

EDWARD B. It was to distinguish the Jews from other nations; but it was very, very cruel, I think.

Emblems. MR. ALCOTT. Was there any spiritual meaning in it?

SOME. It was to teach patience. (See Note 113.)

MR. ALCOTT. What were the doves offered for?

SEVERAL. An emblem of the child's innocence.

SOME. An emblem of the mother's love.

Inspiration. MR. ALCOTT. Simeon was told by the Holy Ghost, that this was the Saviour. Does the Holy Ghost ever tell you any thing?

(*A few raised hands.*) (See note 114.)

Spiritual Triumph. MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by "the falling and rising of many in Israel"?

WELLES. It means the falling and rising of spirits in goodness.

MR. ALCOTT. It means perhaps the lowering of the proud, and the raising of the humble. What is meant by saying, that "the thoughts of many hearts should be revealed"?

ONE. Holiness should be brought out of hearts by the sight of Jesus' sufferings. (See Note 115.)

Temperance. ANOTHER. Did Anna fast all the time?—never eat any thing?

MR. ALCOTT. Fasting, in the Bible, often means, very temperate living.

CHARLES. I think Anna was rather superstitious, fasting in the temple all the time.

RECORDER. There were many servants in the temple, as you will find by reading Moses' laws. They lived

there, and were supported by the sacrifices brought, for the things were not entirely destroyed upon the altar.

Self-Renewal. MR. ALCOTT. She spoke to those who looked for "the redemption." What is spiritual redemption?

ONE. Relief from the load of sin.

MR. ALCOTT. Self-renewal by temperance and holiness.

Spiritual Growth. MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by "waxing strong in spirit"?

SEVERAL. Having knowledge, wisdom, holiness.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the grace of God?

SEVERAL. Blessing. Favor of God.

(Mr. Alcott here read a paraphrase, and referred to the subject of the next conversation.)*

* The reader will bear in mind, that in every conversation, much more was always said, than could be preserved for the record. In this and several of the preceding conversations, but fragments are given. And it may be difficult in some instances to perceive the connexion of the remarks of the children with the general subject of the reading for the day; the intermediate links often being lost, and the subject but imperfectly discussed. These omissions are, however, supplied in part in the Appendix. ED.

CONVERSATION XII.

ADORATION OF SPIRIT BY HALLOWED GENIUS.

INFANT HOLINESS.

Review. — Adoration of the Wise Men, from the Sacred Text. — Reverence of Childhood. — Type of the Star. — Star of Holiness. — Dreams, prophetic and retributive. — Vision of Eliphaz. — Treachery. — Astrology. — Astronomy. — Phrenology. — Sovereignty of Holiness. — Joy at Birth. — Adoration of Infant Holiness. — Maternal Love. — Childhood a Type of Holiness.

Review. MR. ALCOTT. What do you remember of our last conversation ?

Several answered, and recalled among them the principal points of the conversation, especially their thinking that Jesus did not cry when he was circumcised, and that impatience was a sin.

Mr. Alcott then read

THE ADORATION OF THE WISE MEN.

MATT. ii. 1-12.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 5. Julian period, 4709.	Reverence of Childhood.	1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
Bethlehem.		2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.
Jerusalem.		3 When Herod the king had heard <i>these things</i> , he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
		4 And when he had gathered all the Chief Priests and Scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.
		5 And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Bethlehem.

* Mic. v. 2.
John vii 42.

6 * And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda : for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child ; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed ; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him : and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts ; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

He read this twice, and asked what thoughts or images it brought into their minds.

Sign of the Star. EDWARD C. I had the shape of a star in my mind. It did not look like the other stars. It was smaller, and brighter, and more beautiful.

NATHAN. I thought about the king and the star.

MR. ALCOTT. Did the star mean any thing ? (See Note 116.)

EDWARD C. Yes. But I don't know what.

MR. ALCOTT. Did you like Herod, Nathan ?

NATHAN. No. He was going to kill the child, and that was not right. I think the star was John, showing where Jesus was.

MR. ALCOTT. How could John get up there ?

NATHAN. Why, you know he was not born yet.

MR. ALCOTT. John was born. He was six months old. Was the star the sign of John ?

NATHAN. Yes.

EDWARD J. I think Zacharias did not tell Herod that Jesus was born, because he knew that Herod would destroy him if he knew it.

MR. ALCOTT. How came Zacharias there ?

EDWARD J. Why, Herod called all the chief priests together, you know. Afterwards Herod called the Chaldeans.

MR. ALCOTT. Who were the Chaldeans ?

EDWARD J. People who told kings their dreams.

MR. ALCOTT. Were these wise men, Chaldeans ?

EDWARD J. It says so in my "Bible Stories."

MR. ALCOTT. Did you think the wise men good ?

EDWARD J. Yes ; and so they saw the star. Other people did not see the star ; naughty people could not see it. Naughty people cannot see such stars as that ; they can only see the common stars that shine in the night ; only good people see such stars as this one was.

MR. ALCOTT. Are there many such stars ?

EDWARD J. No. God only made one, for Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. Did God make any star when you were born ?

EDWARD J. I guess not, but I don't know ; I could not see.

MR. ALCOTT. Do any of you think God made stars for you when you were born ?

EDWARD J. Perhaps there was a little star made.

WELLES. Conscience is the star we have.

Star of
Holiness.

(*All held up their hands, assenting.*)

JOSIAH. I think the star was a little smaller than the sun and looked like the moon, with rays all round. It stopped over the place where Mary and Joseph were, and it was low down. The wise men came opposite to it. Jesus was lying in the manger, with white hair, like George's, and serene eyes, and slender white cheeks, and very white hands, and white clothes, with a star right here, (*pointing to his forehead*)

and two angels came down and took hold of his hands.

MR. ALCOTT. Did he know the angels ?

JOSIAH. Oh yes. He had been accustomed to see them in heaven. And God sent down a box, and the angels opened it, and a sweet perfume of incense came out, because Jesus was good.

MR. ALCOTT. These are fancies, Josiah, to which there is no end. Do you think any such angels came when you were born ?

JOSIAH. 'There might have been spirits all about in the room, but neither my mother nor I could see them.

MR. ALCOTT. You did not know the angels as Jesus did ?

JOSIAH. No ; because I never stayed in heaven. Mr. Alcott, I think there must have been a great many more signs when Jesus was born than are told. I think of a bow and arrow which came down out of heaven, without any body to hold them, and the bow shot the arrow out of itself, and the arrow flew above the clouds ; which is a sign of the spirit of Jesus, which goes higher than all things.

MR. ALCOTT. 'That is enough, Josiah.

JOSIAH. Mr. Alcott ! I have a great deal more to say ; my mind is full of things, with meanings to them.

ALL. Oh do let him say all, Mr. Alcott.

MR. ALCOTT. No ; John, you may speak. (See Note 117.)

JOHN B. I thought the King wanted the men to go and find Jesus, and come back and tell him ; and when you read that, I guessed that he wanted to kill him. — The wise men followed the star which was in front of them, till it stopped over the manger. They knelt down and worshipped the child, and opened their bag and took out their gifts. They gave the gold to the mother for him, for he would not know about such earthly things. But he knew the wise men. The star was a

diamond shape, as large as the moon, very high, and spread great light all round, and was shining down on the house. And God told the wise men not to go back.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did Herod wish to destroy Jesus ?

JOHN B. Because he thought that he would want to be king. And God told Joseph, when he had just gone to bed, in a dream.

MR. ALCOTT. Did God speak by a voice or in a shape ?

JOHN B. In a shape, but he told him in words.

MR. ALCOTT. Does God ever speak to you in dreams ?

Dreams, prophetic and retributive.

JOHN B. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. And how ?

JOHN B. When I go to bed, sometimes, after I have been naughty, I dream that if I die, I shall not be so good. After I have been good, and have done what mother wants me to, I dream of pleasures. When I am not good, God is sorry and I am sorry, and that gives me pain, and I wake up better.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of the rest of you think God visits you in your dreams ?

(Many held up hands.)

EDWARD J. I never dream.

MR. ALCOTT. Was Joseph's dream different from your dreams ?

(Many held up hands.)

CHARLES. It was more holy, it was to foretell so great a thing.

JOHN B. It was more true.

ALEXANDER. There was more sense in his dreams than in ours.

JOHN D. He had more faith in his dreams, because he was more spiritual.

WILLIAM B. I very seldom have any dreams, but

when I do, I think very often, that I am told to do wrong things, and sometimes I do them, and then evil befalls me. And I do not see how any body can know what dreams are really sent by God to direct them. I believe there are good dreams, but I don't see how Joseph could know. But sometimes I have thought that people around Jerusalem and thereabouts, seldom had dreams, and when they did they were those that they should mind.

MR. ALCOTT. You say you seldom dream ?

WILLIAM B. I often dream of little outward things that seem to have no connexion ; but I very seldom have long connected dreams. But when I have done wrong, I have dreamed that a wolf was coming to eat me up, and other frightful things. I think God punishes in this way those who do wrong, but I had rather be punished in any other way than by frightful dreams.

MR. ALCOTT. Is such punishment effectual ?

WILLIAM B. I think it is. (See Note 118.)

CHARLES. They seemed to believe in dreams in those days more than now. They were prophetic.

MR. ALCOTT. Were they prophetic to those who did not believe ?

CHARLES. No ; only to those who had faith.

MR. ALCOTT. Let me read you a dream from the Old Testament.

THE VISION OF ELIPHAZ.

JOB IV. 12-21.

12 Now a thing was secretly brought to me,
Sense of the and mine ear received a little thereof.
Supernatural.

13 In thoughts from the visions of the night,
when deep sleep falleth on men,

14 Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all
my bones to shake.

15 'Then a spirit passed before my face ; the hair of my
flesh stood up :

16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof :
an image *was* before mine eyes ; *there was* silence, and I
heard a voice, *saying*,

- 17 Shall mortal man be more just than God ?
 Shall a man be more pure than his maker ?
- 18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants ;
 And his angels he charged with folly :
- 19 How much less *in* them that dwell in houses of clay,
 Whose foundation *is* in the dust, *which* are crushed
 before the moth ?
- 20 They are destroyed from morning to evening :
 They perish for ever without any regarding *it*.
- 21 Doth not their excellency *which is* in them go away ?
 They die, even without wisdom.

He then returned to the question of the day.

Treachery. LEMUEL. Herod was very bad. He ought not to have sent those wise men so—it was deceiving. He was a murderer. He told a lie when he said he was going to worship.

CHARLES. I thought the star represented God's eye looking on his son to protect him. Herod called the wise men privily, because he was afraid of a rebellion. If the angel had not appeared to Joseph, Herod would have destroyed Jesus. (See Note 119.)

WILLIAM B. I think he called the wise men privily, because he wanted to make them believe that he wanted to worship ; but he did not wish the Jews to think that he wanted to worship, even for a short time. I do not think God appeared in a shape or with a voice to Joseph, but that he moved his conscience with his spirit, so that Joseph felt he must go.

LUCIA. The first thought I had was about Joseph's journey into Egypt. He and Mary were on asses, and Jesus was in Joseph's arms. I then thought of the wise men journeying in another direction. Then I thought of Herod waiting for their return, and his rage when they did not come. The star was larger and shone brighter than the rest. It disappeared when Mary and Joseph were going to Egypt, for God did not want it to show Jesus to Herod.

FREDERIC. Herod was very treacherous in telling the wise men he was going to worship, when he was going to kill.

MR. ALCOTT. How do you think the
Astrology. wise men knew that the star was the Jewish King's ?

LUCIA. God told them so.

CHARLES. There had been a rumor through the land that Jesus was to be born, and when they saw that there was a new star, they knew there was somebody born.

WILLIAM B. Simeon was a prophet, and he might have given rise to the rumor that Christ should be born when that star appeared. He seemed to know the child.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think common stars mean anything ?

(Many held up hands.)

FRANK. The stars mean other worlds.

MR. ALCOTT explained the meaning of As-
Astronomy. tronomy, and then spoke of Astrology, and what astrologers thought they found out by the stars.)

MR. ALCOTT. Astronomers find what they seek ; Astrologers seek in the stars what is to be found in conscience alone.

ALEXANDER. And in bumps on the head.
Phrenology. *(Mr. Alcott here told what the theory of Phrenology was, without saying whether he believed in it or not.)* (See Note 120.)

(He then read the quotation from the Prophet, with which the Jews answered the wise men, and asked who was that Governor ?)

Sovereignty
of Holiness.

LUCIA. Jesus. He governs our spirits.

MR. ALCOTT. How?

LUCIA. By being an example to us, and being much more powerful.

CHARLES. He tells us how to do right by conscience, he comes and speaks to the conscience, he is conscience.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you mean that God acts on Jesus, so that Jesus acts on you?

CHARLES. Why God and Jesus are one, and conscience is a part of the same spirit.

WILLIAM B. I think my conscience is God, not Jesus — I don't think God and Jesus are one.

Joy at Birth.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did the wise men rejoice when they saw Jesus?

LUCIA. They thought from the looks of the star, that Jesus was going to be very great and good.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did they give him gifts?

LUCIA. Because they wanted to distinguish him.

WILLIAM B. Because they respected him.

CHARLES. It was the custom of the East.

MR. ALCOTT. Were any presents made when you were born?

FRANKLIN. Presents are made sometimes when a child is named from a particular person.

ANOTHER. The child is a present to its mother.

Adoration of
Infant Holiness.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did they worship him?

SEVERAL. Because he was great and pure.

MR. ALCOTT. Were you worshipped when you were born?

SEVERAL. (*Laughing.*) No.

CHARLES. We were adored by our mothers.

MR. ALCOTT. If you were not worshipped, you were not thought about as you should have been. Wise men reverence the new born.

LUCIA. Yes, in one sense, they worship, because children are so pure, and innocent, and spiritual. (See Note 121.)

MR. ALCOTT. In what sense should a babe be worshipped? How should it be?

LUCIA. By being taken care of, and thought about, and loved with spiritual love.

MR. ALCOTT. Has it any love from God itself?

LUCIA. Love came with it from heaven.

MR. ALCOTT. What must be done with this love?

LUCIA. It must be made to grow out.

MR. ALCOTT. How can love be made to grow out?

LUCIA. By loving it first.

CHARLES. The face of a young child has something in it which makes its mother love it. (See Note 122.)

(Mr. Alcott here asked them if they had infant brothers and sisters, and if they should not hereafter think there was something very precious and sacred in their souls, to be worshipped—and if this would not lead them to refrain from teasing them, disappointing, thwarting, neglecting them, and leaving them to cry. They responded with much interest to all these questions.)

CHARLES. I think a mother who leaves her child to cry, is a barbarian.

MR. ALCOTT. So she is if she can help it. Maternal Love. She should never let any thing interfere with the care of her child; but keep its little body comfortable in order to bring out its mind. For the body is a small part. The spirit is to be brought out in love and confidence and faith, before the mind can be cultivated, before the child can talk. These duties are not yet well understood by mothers. But they wish to do all they

can, generally. Of all persons, mothers are most faithful to their duties. And when children are neglected or injured, it is usually because mothers have other duties, from which they are not relieved by others as they should be, and as they would be, if all felt right upon this subject, and revered children as they ought to do.

WILLIAM C. We have a little baby at home, but I never thought of its soul.

MR. ALCOTT. So you thought it was a little body only, and that was all? You forgot its spirit.

WILLIAM C. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Oh, then you have never
Childhood a
 Type of Ho-
 liness. seen the child which God loves. (See
 Note 123.)

(He then read a paraphrase. The children expressed deep interest in this conversation.)

CONVERSATION XIII.

APOSTACY OF SPIRIT.

MALIGNITY.

Review. — Knowledge of the Young Spirit. — Massacre of the Innocents, from the Sacred Text. — Pictures of Cruelty. — Emblems of Herod. — Sense of Retribution. — Punishment. — Prejudice.

Review. MR. ALCOTT. What kind of wisdom had the wise men, of whom we talked last time ?

EDWARD B. The knowledge of the stars and learned books.

FREDERIC. They knew things some sly way.

MR. ALCOTT. Were they jugglers ? I don't think so.

FRANKLIN. They had the power of prophecy by means of the stars which helped them some. (See Note 124.)

CHARLES. Wisdom is knowledge of God.

LUCIA. They studied their own minds, they tried to find out good and evil.

FRANK. I think it was worldly wisdom.

RECORDER. What is that ?

FRANK. Knowing how things are made. (See Note 125.)

Knowledge of
the Young
Spirit. MR. ALCOTT. They revered children ;
and their wisdom consisted in perceiving
in the infant spirit the sign of holiness ;
of God.

Having enlarged a little on this, he read the

MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS.

MATT. ii. 13-23. LUKE ii. 40.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 5.
Julian Period,
4709.

Egypt.

Cruelty. 13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

* 1 Hos. xi. 1.

* Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Bethlehem.

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

† Jer. xxxi. 15.

18 † In Rama there a voice heard,
Lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping *for* her children,

And would not be comforted because they are not

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 3.
Julian Period,
4711.

Egypt.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21 And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

LUKE ii. 40.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

He then asked for their thoughts.

GEORGE B. 'I don't think Herod was a good man, because he killed all the children in Bethlehem.

Pictures of
Cruelty.

MR. ALCOTT. You may each of you make a picture of what I have read.

FRANK. I thought of a temple on one side, and two steeples out of it, and two stone stairs up to the top, and a row of houses on one side, and the door open of one house, and the house was empty ; and on the sidewalk there was a man and child dead ; all was still ; the houses were empty, and the people were on the tops of the houses.

EDWARD C. I saw the children killed, and God telling Joseph to take Jesus away.

EDWARD J. I thought I saw one of the children when they were hanging him. I thought I should not like to be there. I saw a great many men and children. The children were standing up and not killed yet.

NATHAN. I saw a very great temple, and a board laid up high, and a spring of water at the end of it ; and they rolled the children down the board into the spring.

JOSIAH. 'There was a great door to the house where Herod lived, and a great steeple ; and little steeples all about ; and Herod looked out of a window, at the men killing the children. The children were tied to a string, and struck on the head with an axe, by one of Herod's servants ; and their mothers were looking out of the windows.

WILLIAM C. I saw a great house where Herod was, and his servants went into the houses, and asked how old the children were, and all under two years old they took and killed.

ALEXANDER. I thought Herod sent all his ruffians to kill the children with swords. He was standing at the door at first, waiting for the wise men, and was angry at their not coming back.

JOHN B. I thought of a house as large as this temple, with large iron doors, large window. Because the wise men did not come back, Herod sent out his servants to kill all the little babies. And he stood upon the steps looking. He heard some weeping. It was the mothers, and he pretended that he was weeping. 'Then I thought of Joseph's dream in Egypt, and the journey back from Egypt.

LUCIA. When Herod saw that the wise men did not come back, he was angry. 'Then he thought he should certainly kill Jesus if he killed all the children. So he sent out his men to kill them. 'The mothers were trying to keep their children out of the hands of the men.

And I saw Egypt in my mind, when Joseph and Mary were there, and Joseph asleep. And his conscience seemed to me to tell him that Herod was dead, and he might go back. And I saw him and Mary carrying the child back ; and when he heard Archelaus was reigning he went to Nazareth, because he was afraid Archelaus would be just like his father.

EDWARD J. I wish you would read the history of Palestine, Mr. Alcott.

EDWARD B. This was my picture. I thought of Herod sitting on his throne, waiting for the wise men ; and he waited so long that he had to turn his face round to hide it, it was so red and angry. Soon he called the soldiers to go and kill all the children in Bethlehem ; and as soon as the mothers heard of this order, they took their children in their arms, and ran about the streets, screaming. And I saw many children on the side walks dead, and their mothers tearing their hair. And I thought Herod himself seized on one child which he thought might be Jesus, and threw it out of the window, and its own mother caught it, and then a soldier seized it, and killed it.

CHARLES. I imagined Herod, just as his anger was raging, and his passionate order was given to the soldiers to kill every child. And they went out and did as he commanded ; and the mothers were so frantic, that they tried to kill the soldiers themselves. I imagined there were stone steps to the houses, and both mothers and children were pitched down the stone steps and killed. And all this while, Herod was looking out at the window, and seeing the slaughter ; and at last he could bear it no longer, and stopped it. But when he found Jesus was not killed, he repented of this mercy.

WILLIAM B. I thought of a place ten times as large as this temple. And there was a large room and a beautiful throne, with golden steps, very high, and a great window, and a door open into the street ; and soldiers were standing round, waiting ; and Herod was waiting for the wise men, till at last he was in such a rage, that he did not know what he was saying, and he told the soldiers to go and kill all the children in the town. And they were afraid to disobey him, and went. And Herod clapped his hands as he saw the massacre go on, looking out of his great window. And he saw one mother, with a child crying, praying ; and Herod thought it must be the mother of Jesus, and he sent for it, and had it brought in, and killed it himself. The soldiers were flying about, and the mothers were also flying about frantically, and throwing stones ; and now and then a soldier fell dead. And when Herod afterwards found Jesus was not dead, he killed all the soldiers.

Emblems
of Herod.

MR. ALCOTT. What name would suit the character of Herod ?

JOSIAH. A wicked crocodile ; for he sought for Jesus, by the wise men, under the pretence of worship-

ping him ; and the crocodile deceives his prey by crying like a child. So Herod was like a crocodile.

LUCIA. A tiger-hearted murderer.

EDWARD J. A tyrant and pirate.

EMMA. Very revengeful and cruel.

EDWARD B. He was like a hyena, a very great abomination.

NATHAN. A deceiver and a thief.

MR. ALCOTT. What did he steal ?

NATHAN. Children.

EMMA. I think after the children were killed, Herod was sorry, though he felt glad at first.

MR. ALCOTT. Who else think he was sorry ? (See Note 126.)

(All but three held up their hands.)

JOSEPH. I thought of the angel that came to Joseph in Egypt.

MR. ALCOTT. Did the angel come in an outward shape ?

EMMA. I think of angels with shapes ; yet I do not think they have shapes.

FREDERIC. I think it was bad enough for Herod to kill Jesus ; but to kill so many children !!

SAMUEL R. I think if the wise men had come back and told Herod the truth, he would have killed Jesus and no other, and that would have been bad enough.

MR. ALCOTT. What does it mean by Herod's being "mocked of the wise men" ?

CHARLES. To mock seems to mean to slight.

EDWARD B. To deceive.

MR. ALCOTT. "He was wroth." What is wroth ?

EMMA. Angry.

MR. ALCOTT. Who think Herod believed in Astrology ?

(Many did.) (See Note 127.)

Sense of
Retribution.

(*Mr. Alcott here described a similar scene to the massacre as taking place in Boston, and their brothers and sisters the victims. He then asked some questions to find out whether the children thought they should be filled more with pity for the children, or anger for the men ; and how much they would think of punishing the men, and what their feeling about punishment was. My record is too confused for me to give the details.*)

Punishment.

(*Some conversation ensued on punishment in school, and Mr. Alcott asked who felt pleasure when they saw other boys punished.*)

SEVERAL. When they have troubled us, we do.

JOSIAH. I feel pleasure in seeing boys punished. I don't know why.

WILLIAM B. Is it the pleasure of revenge ?

EDWARD J. I do not know, but I take pleasure in it.

MR. ALCOTT. Who think the feeling wrong ?

(*All rose.*) (See Note 128.)

Prejudice.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did Joseph distrust Archelaus ?

SEVERAL. Because he was Herod's son.

(*Mr. Alcott here made some remarks on hereditary and family character ; on family prejudices, &c. ; on prejudice in general, and then closed by reading a paraphrase, and referring to the next conversation.*)

CONVERSATION XIV.

GENIUS OF SPIRIT.

CHILDHOOD.

Jesus with the Doctors in the Temple, from the Sacred Text. — Wisdom of Childhood. — Idea of Jesus with the Doctors. — Inspiration of Childhood: — General Inspiration. — Genius of Childhood. — Parental Instinct. — Idea of Childhood. — Misapprehension of Childhood.

MR. ALCOTT. There is no account given us of the time between two years old and twelve of Jesus' life. (See Note 129.) But when he was twelve, something occurred, which I will now read.

He then read the account of

JESUS WITH THE DOCTORS IN THE TEMPLE.

LUKE ii. 41 to the end.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 7.
Julian Period,
4720.

Jerusalem.

* Deut. xvi. 1.

Wisdom of
Childhood.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem *every year at the feast of the Passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it*.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 7.
Julian Period,
4720.

Jerusalem.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Mr. Alcott asked what interested them most?

Idea of Jesus
with the Doc-
tors.

NATHAN. Jesus talking with the ministers.

MR. ALCOTT. What is he talking about?

NATHAN. God.

HALES. I thought about Jesus with the ministers.

JOSIAH. I thought about his parents returning and looking for him. They travel in that country on an ass's back, with a basket on the ass to ride in. Jesus and his mother were in the basket when they went up, and the people were walking all round, but Jesus was not there when they were returning.

SAMUEL T. Jesus was sitting with the doctors, he was in the pulpit.

EDWARD J. I had no thought, but I heard it all.

JOHN D. Jesus knew a great deal more than the doctors who stood round him listening.

JOSEPH. I thought Jesus ought to have told his father and mother that he was going to stay behind.

MR. ALCOTT. Well, how do you explain that he did not?

JOSEPH. Perhaps he did not know when they went.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you suppose he was doing all that time?

JOSEPH. He was talking with the ministers.

MR. ALCOTT. Should you have liked to talk with them, had you been in his place?

JOSEPH. Perhaps I should, but I don't know.

WELLES. When you were reading, I thought, that Jesus knew his father and mother had gone, but still that he thought he would stay and teach the doctors a little while.

JOHN B. I imagined Jesus going into the temple where a great many ministers were teaching people to be good. But Jesus did not see his parents go out, and they thought he was following behind, till bye and bye, when they were almost home, they looked round and found he was not there — so they went back and found him teaching people to be good, which is what God is doing all the time. This was what interested me most.

FREDERIC. I thought of Jesus arguing with the doctors. He was trying to make them think that what he was saying was true, and they were trying to make him think that what they were saying was true. But Jesus' arguments were the best.

AUGUSTINE. I thought they were trying to say something which Jesus could not answer, to try him. But he answered every one, without any trouble.

GEORGE B. I think of him asking questions to teach the doctors.

LEMUEL. I understand the answer he gave to Mary. It was God's business.

MR. ALCOTT. What is God's business ?

LEMUEL. Being good, and talking and teaching about good things. (See Note 130.)

ALEXANDER. I think of him preaching to the doctors ; but I really think it was wrong for him to stay there without telling his parents.

MR. ALCOTT. You mean that you do not see how it was right ?

ALEXANDER. No ; it seems to me it was wrong.

MR. ALCOTT. Are any more perplexed with this thought ?

(Several raised their hands.)

Do you think if you understood all about it you should think it was wrong ?

ALL. I suppose not.

WILLIAM B. Yet I must say I cannot understand why Jesus did not tell his parents that he was going to stay there. It does not seem to me that it was right.

RECORDER. Jesus was carried up to the temple at twelve years old, in conformity to the Jewish custom, to be enrolled among the males of the nation. It was Moses' direction that every child should be taught the Jewish history and laws. At this time it is probable that the boys were asked questions by the learned men, to see if they were properly educated. They could also ask explanations of what they did not understand in their law and history. Jesus was probably engaged in such a conversation as this. I think it was only strange that his parents should have gone without him. I should think that in any case of a son, and more especially in the case of such a son as that, the parents would have watched what passed at such a memorable era of every Jew's life. I see no failure of duty except in the parents.

WILLIAM B. That takes away all my difficulties.

MR. ALCOTT. Does it help any of the rest ?

(All held up hands.)

CHARLES. He thought his heavenly father's business was of most consequence.

MR. ALCOTT. When you are perplexed in this way, I wish you would say, "I do not see how it was right for Jesus to do so and so," for it is not pleasant to hear little boys say, "I think Jesus did wrong," — none of you think so.

WILLIAM C. I was interested in Jesus' talking with the doctors ; because it was remarkable that he should say such things at twelve years old.

MR. ALCOTT. How came he to know so much ?

Inspiration of
Childhood.

WILLIAM C. Because he was God's son.

MR. ALCOTT. Did God teach him in a particular way, different from the way in which he teaches the rest of his children ?

WILLIAM B. Yes, he taught him before he came into the world.

MR. ALCOTT. How do the rest of you think Jesus was taught by God ?

JOSIAH. I think God made him think, God made him understand, before he came from heaven, and God spoke to his spirit afterwards as he does to ours, only a great deal more.

MR. ALCOTT. Did God whisper into his mind ?

JOSIAH. No, God made him think.

AUGUSTINE. I think if we should be as good as Jesus God would act on us just so, and we should know as much as he. He resisted the temptations.

MR. ALCOTT. What temptations ?

AUGUSTINE. The appetites and passions ; if we should resist them we should know as much as he did.

JOHN B. Jesus was just the same as we are, only a great deal better.

MR. ALCOTT. How was he "just the same" ?

JOHN B. Why God made him, and God made us.

MR. ALCOTT. Was it God or Jesus who made the difference between Jesus and us ?

JOHN B. Jesus. (See Note 131.)

WILLIAM B. I think God made the difference, for God does not help us so much as he did Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. Who think, that even if you do all you can, God will not help you as much ?

(*Many rose.*) (See Note 132.)

Do you think Jesus was a favorite ?

WELLES. I do not like to say so. I think Jesus was helped that he might help others.

THE REST. So do I.

MR. ALCOTT. Now those may rise who think that if you should do as much as you can, you would be helped as much as Jesus was ?

(Several rose.)

Some of you then think, it seems, that God influenced Jesus more than any one else, for the purpose of making him the means of influencing others. Others think that he would influence all as much if all would let him do so. Some of you think God made the difference, in order to benefit others. Others think that Jesus made the difference by accepting or deserving more aid from God.

(They severally responded by hands.)

General
Inspiration.

AUGUSTINE. Every one would be like Jesus if every one was as willing as God is.

JOHN B. I cannot understand why Jesus Christ was so much better than any body else. I don't see how, or why.

MR. ALCOTT. Do other people try as much ?

JOHN B. I don't see what made him try so much more.

RECORDER. That is the very question, John, which all the world are asking. It takes a life to answer it. — Why is it that Jesus tried ; and why do not others try ; and how can all be made to try as he did.

MR. ALCOTT. It will be the effect of these conversations, to answer this question, I hope.

Emblems of Spir-
itual Growth.

GEORGE K. I was most interested in his growing wiser and better every day, as is mentioned in the last verse.

MR. ALCOTT. What does "grow in wisdom and stature" mean?

GEORGE K. His mind grew, and his body grew.

MR. ALCOTT. Can you give some emblem of this?

GEORGE K. He opened out like the tree from the nut.

MR. ALCOTT. Could it be seen how he opened out?

GEORGE K. They could not see his spirit, but they could see his body grow.

MR. ALCOTT. You may give some emblems of Jesus' growth.

LUCIA. He was like the seed, which sprouts under ground a good while, first. And, Mr Alcott, I was interested about their seeking him among their acquaintance. As they were travelling home, Joseph wanted to talk with Jesus, and so he found out he was gone, and began to seek him with great anxiety. (See Note 133.)

MR. ALCOTT. What does *kinsfolk* mean?

LUCIA. Relations.

MR. ALCOTT. How many have heard the words *kin*, *akin*, *kindred*, *kind*, *kindly*? *Kind* was the old Saxon word for *nature*.

ONE. I think it is strange that Jesus was not frightened at being left so long!

EMMA. He knew God would take care of him.

CHARLES. God would take care of his own son!—
(See Note 134.)

Genius of
Childhood. FRANKLIN. I liked best their finding him
in the Temple, and his telling them what
he came into the world for.

CHARLES. I thought the doctors asked him questions, not to get information out of him, but to try him; and they were taught in spite of themselves, and very much shamed.

EMMA. I was interested in Jesus' answer to Mary.

EDWARD J. So was I, and at their not understanding what he meant.

MR. ALCOTT. What did he mean ?

EDWARD J. God's business.

MR. ALCOTT. What kind of questions do you think Jesus asked the doctors ; what sort of a conversation was it ?

GEORGE K. I think he asked whether they loved God, and loved to pray to God, and what sort of men they were.

EMMA. I think he asked questions about God in man, about Spirit.

CHARLES. I thought he asked questions to try their learning ; for they thought they knew a great deal ; he asked what they believed about God.

WILLIAM B. I think the doctors asked Jesus questions, not to puzzle him, but to see what he knew ; and he asked them questions so as to tell them the truth when they made mistakes. (See Note 135.)

SEVERAL. I thought it was a pleasant conversation.

OTHERS. It was more of a discussion than a conversation.

MR. ALCOTT. Why were they astonished at his answers ?

WILLIAM B. Because they implied so much knowledge of God and spiritual subjects.

LEMUEL. This was the best sort of knowledge.

SEVERAL. Because he was so young. (See Note 136.)

MR. ALCOTT. Do you believe there are any children now, who instruct grown up people by their understanding and their answers ?

(Many thought so.)

Was it natural for Mary and Joseph to feel anxious ?

ALL. Yes.

Parental
Instinct.

MR. ALCOTT. Was it natural for Mary to say what she did to her son ?

ALL. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. What feeling did her words express ?

SEVERAL. Anxiety ; a mother's love.

(Mr. Alcott remarked at large on a mother's love.)

RECORDER. Did you hear how, at the fire in Sea Street the other night, a mother rushed into her burning house for her child, through the flames, and was burnt up with it ?

(All testified great interest.)

MR. ALCOTT. Do any think that was wonderful ?

SEVERAL. Not wonderful. It was natural.

MR. ALCOTT. Was it not beautiful ?

JOHN B. Yes, but it would have been hard-hearted if she had not.

Idea of
Childhood.

MR. ALCOTT. Do fathers and mothers now "wist" or "know" what their children are doing, what is going on in their minds, even when they are in the cradle, smiling and moving their little hands ?

(There was no answer.)

Who have a little brother or sister at home ?

(Some held up hands.)

Do you know what is going on in that little babe's mind ?

(None.)

How many desire to know ?

(Several held up hands.)

Do you think these little infants are about their Father's business ?

(Several held up hands.)

How many think it is a little animal, with nothing in

its mind, and with no more goodness than a little kitten's, as I heard a person say once ?

(Four held up hands.)

Who think its goodness is much more positive than a kitten's ?

(All the rest.)

Was the infant Jesus just like any little baby you know ?

(All thought so but four.)

William B., thinks babies have no goodness at first. How do they get it ?

WILLIAM B. I don't know.

AUGUSTINE. God gives it.

MR. ALCOTT. Who think that the spirit within is the real child, and the body but shows where it is ?

(All raised hands.)

Who think that when babies play, and smile, and love, they have begun their father's business ?

(All.)

Why did not Mary understand Jesus' answer ?

MARTHA. She thought of Joseph's trade.

MR. ALCOTT. Do parents generally understand what is going on in the hearts and minds of their children ?

Misapprehension of Childhood.

WILLIAM B. Parents very seldom understand what passes in their children's minds, especially concerning spiritual subjects and their feelings.

(Almost all the rest rose to assent to the same opinion.) (See Note 137.)

(Mr. Alcott read a paraphrase, and spoke of the subject of this and the next conversation.)

CONVERSATION XV.

INTEGRITY OF SPIRIT.

FILIAL PIETY.

Jesus at Nazareth Fourteen Years, from the Sacred Text. — Maternal Prudence. — Filial Love and Obedience. — Motives to Obedience. — Authority of Holiness. — Liability to Temptation. — Mission of Life.

Mr. Alcott recalled the subject of the last conversation, and then read

JESUS AT NAZARETH FOURTEEN YEARS.

LUKE ii. 51, 52.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 7. Filial Obe-
dience.
Julian Period,
4720.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

Nazareth.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

MR. ALCOTT. These verses contain all that is said of Jesus, from the time he was twelve till he was thirty years of age. What do you suppose he was doing all these eighteen years? (See Note 138.)

EDWARD J. That reading does not bring any thing to my mind, it is not long enough.

WILLIAM C. I think he was growing wise.

JOHN B. I think that after he went to Nazareth, he told his mother what he had been doing in the temple, and what his "Father's business" was, and she kept it all to herself.

Maternal
Prudence.

ALEXANDER. I think the reason she did not tell any body what he said was, because she did not want people to praise him. She

did not want him to be proud, for she did not know that he could not be proud, but she knew from the angel, that he was to be great.

AUGUSTINE. I think he asked his mother not to say any thing about him, because he thought people would not understand, and would make fun of him. I think he worked in his father's shop, and did carpenter's work, and shaped out his thoughts in things.

Filial Obedience. LUCIA. I think "subject to them" means that he obeyed his parents. When his father and mother wanted him to do any thing he did it, and he did not wait to have them ask him.

MR. ALCOTT. Why was he so obedient?

LUCIA. His mother taught him; and his Father in heaven, before he came into the world, taught him.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think he taught his mother, or his mother taught him most?

LUCIA. I don't know; he taught her by his actions.

MR. ALCOTT. Why were these actions right? Why was this obedience so ready?

EMMA. He knew what was right; his conscience told him so.

WILLIAM B. He wanted to do right.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did he want to do right?

EMMA. Because he loved his parents.

MR. ALCOTT. Love, love! how many of you have that love, which makes you want to obey your parents, both when they ask you, and before they ask you, as Jesus did?

(Most held up their hands.)

EDWARD J. I don't know exactly. (See Note 139.)

Motives to Obedience. MR. ALCOTT. Can any of you remember when you wanted to do something very much, and knew your parents did not want

you to do it, but they had not said any thing to you about it ; and yet you gave up your want ?

(Some held up hands.)

How many of you mind your parents, because you think they will punish you, and in some way make you do as they wish ? (See Note 140.)

(Some hesitated, but none acknowledged.)

Those who have been punished within the last six months, may rise.

(A good many rose.)

Now those who have done wrong, whether punished or not.

(All rose but Nathan.)

MR. ALCOTT. Have you not done wrong for six months ?

NATHAN. No.

MR. ALCOTT. Have you not been angry ; nor struck any body, nor said any thing wrong ; nor felt any thing wrong during this time ?

NATHAN. No, (to each item answering.) (See Note 141.)

MR. ALCOTT. Well ; you are an extraordinary person. No one else would say so.

(Nathan did not answer.)

Suppose Luke had written down that Jesus sometimes quarrelled with his companions, sometimes disobeyed his mother, &c.

JOHN B. I should not have believed him.

SAMUEL T. I should have torn the leaves out of my Bible.

AUGUSTINE. The apocryphal Bible tells a great many such stories.

EDWARD J. I should like to hear some of them.

MR. ALCOTT. No ; We cannot waste the time. Charles, what are you interested in to-day ?

CHARLES. Jesus' being subject to his father and mother means, that he felt their superiority in knowledge and age.

MR. ALCOTT. Did Jesus always do such things with his hands as he was asked to do by his parents ?

(All thought so.)

But the mind does things as well as the hands. (See Note 142.)

Authority of
Holiness.

Are children's minds ever superior to those of their parents ?

(Some thought so.)

Give an instance.

ONE. A child is superior to a drunken father.

EMMA. An infant is superior to its parents in goodness. (See Note 143.)

MR. ALCOTT. Name some of that goodness.

EMMA. An infant is more holy. It has a different kind of goodness from that of an excellent man.

LUCIA. It never knew how to do wrong. But good men did wrong when they were young.

MR. ALCOTT. How came they to begin ?

LUCIA. They saw others do wrong.

MR. ALCOTT. But how did the first persons begin ?

Liability to
Temptation.

LUCIA. They were tempted by their passions.

MR. ALCOTT. Have little children any passions ?

LUCIA. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Where do passions come from ?

(There was no reply.)

Suppose the parents are good as usual ; honest, kind, generous ; do they ever have children superior to themselves ?

FREDERIC. If the child loves God and the man does not, the child is best.

EMMA. The child is superior, because it is more holy.

MR. ALCOTT. Which do you suppose is best, Jesus as at thirty years old, or an infant ?

SEVERAL. They are alike good.

SOME. The infant.

OTHERS. No, Jesus, because he resisted temptation. He loved.

MR. ALCOTT. Could you keep yourselves from loving entirely ?

(All thought no.) (See note 144.)

Is there any virtue in loving because you cannot help it ?

(There was a difference of opinion.)

Is God good ?

(All held up hands.)

Was he ever tempted ?

(There were opposite opinions.) (See Note 145.)

How many think that temptation proves, but does not give goodness ?

(Some held up hands.)

Do you remember the two trees in Paradise ? What is the tree of life in a baby's spirit ?

WELLES. Goodness.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the tree of knowledge there ?

EMMA. The senses.

MR. ALCOTT. Was Jesus tempted while a child ? and did he eat of the tree of knowledge ?

WILLIAM B. He was tempted, but he did not do the evil, and he was not tempted so often as we, because he was holy. (See Note 146.)

MR. ALCOTT. How was Jesus employed eighteen years at Nazareth ?

SEVERAL. Working in his father's shop.

MR. ALCOTT. What was his mind doing ?

SEVERAL. He was thinking of what he
Mission of Life. came into the world for ?

MR. ALCOTT. Each one of you may think what you came into the world for, and tell me. (See Note 147.)

(They did not seem to think they came into the world on any particular mission, but Mr. Alcott seemed to convince them that they must have done so, and that each one must find out for himself what it was, as Jesus probably did, by self insight, and observation of nature and life.)*

* The review, as given in the appendix, closed with this conversation. By means of the notes, the reader will be able to realize the general spirit of the preceding conversations, though much of the detail is lost in the record. From this point, the conversations are more fully reported. ED.

CONVERSATION XVI.

ORGANIZATION OF SPIRIT.

CORPOREAL RELATIONS.

Genealogy of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Transmission of Life. — Lineage of Spirit. — Era of the Incarnation. — Pre-existence of Spirit. — Eternity of Spirit. — Incarnation of Spirit. — Analogy and Emblem of Human Birth. — Spirit organizes Body. — Organic Law of Temperance. — Violation of Organic Law. — Hereditary Disease. — Longevity of Body. — Laws of Life. — Transfiguration of Spirit. — Laws of Renovation and Decay. — Mutability of Matter. — Transfusion of Spirit. — Review.

Mr. Alcott asked how they felt disposed towards the conversation to-day. Two or three thought they should not be interested ; and he asked why ?

LEMUEL. I don't feel as if I should.

MR. ALCOTT. Well, can you not master this feeling ? Try to-day.

WILLIAM C. I have the headache.

MR. ALCOTT. We have spoken sometimes of the power of spirit over body. Now see if you cannot exert your spirit so as to drive the headache away.

He then read the

GENEALOGY OF JESUS FROM GOD.

LUKE iii. 23-38. MATT. i. 1-17.

Eternity.
Time.

Transmission of Life. 23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed)

the son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli,

24 Which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi, which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Janna, which was *the son* of Joseph,

25 Which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Amos, which was *the son* of Naum, which was *the son* of Esli, which was *the son* of Nagge,

26 Which was *the son* of Maath, which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Semci, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Juda,

27 Which was *the son* of Joanna, which was *the son* of Rhesa, which was *the son* of Zorobabel, which was *the son* of Salathiel, which was *the son* of Neri,

28 Which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Addi, which was *the son* of Cosam, which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was *the son* of Er,

29 Which was *the son* of Jose, which was *the son* of Eliezer, which was *the son* of Jorim, which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi,

30 Which was *the son* of Simcon, which was *the son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim,

31 Which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of Nathan, which was *the son* of David,

32 Which was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son* of Obed, which was *the son* of Booz, which was *the son* of Salmon, which was *the son* of Naasson,

33 Which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Esrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of Juda,

34 Which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham, which was *the son* of Thara, which was *the son* of Nachor,

35 Which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec, which was *the son* of Heber, which was *the son* of Sala,

36 Which was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Arphaxad, which was *the son* of Sem, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech,

37 Which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was *the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan,

38 Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

MATT. i. 1 - 17.

1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren.

3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom. And Esrom begat Aram;

4 And Aram begat Aminadab. And Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon.

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth. And Obed begat Jesse;

6 And Jesse begat David the king. And David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;

7 And Solomon begat Roboam. And Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa.

8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram. And Joram begat Ozias;

9 And Ozias begat Joatham. And Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias.

10 And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon. And Amon begat Josias;

11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel.

13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim. And Eliakim begat Azor;

14 And Azor begat Sadoc. And Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud

15 And Eliud begat Eleazer; and Eleazer begat Matthan. And Matthan begat Jacob;

16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born JESUS, who is called CHRIST.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

Now tell me what this reading has brought into your minds.

SEVERAL. Nothing.

LEMUEL. It is about the generation of Christ from God.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you mean by generation?

LEMUEL. The fathers of Jesus Christ.

MR. ALCOTT. The parentage, fatherhood.

GEORGE K. Those were very hard names, yet I thought it all meant something, but I did not know what.

ANDREW. It was to show how many people lived before Jesus Christ, so as to show at what time he lived.

FRANKLIN. It was to show who his forefathers were.

MR. ALCOTT. What is a forefather?

AUGUSTINE. A grandfather, and his father. That was a list of the forefathers of Jesus, a genealogy.

MARTHA. I don't think Adam was the son of God, but I know Jesus was.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you mean by Adam's not being the son of God? Here is the assertion in the book which tells no lies.

JOSIAH. Both Adam and Jesus were sons of God.

AUGUSTINE. In one sense, we are all sons of God.

FRANKLIN. I think that Adam was called the son of God, because he had no earthly father, and so God made his body as well as his spirit. And God made Jesus' body, as well as spirit; for he was only supposed to be the son of Joseph.

MR. ALCOTT. Does that meet your difficulty, Martha?

MARTHA. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Are you the daughter of God?

MARTHA. In one sense. My spirit is.

MR. ALCOTT. But when you think of another part of yourself, do you take something else into consideration beside God?

MARTHA. My body, my parents.

MR. ALCOTT. We are talking about the
Era of the Incarnation. generation of Jesus. In what time did he live?

(No answer.)

In what time do you live?

(For a while there was no answer.)

FRANKLIN. 1836 years after Jesus Christ was born.

MR. ALCOTT. Why do we reckon time from Jesus Christ's birth?

FRANKLIN. Because it was a great event.

MR. ALCOTT. Why was it great ?

ANDREW. Because he did so many miracles, and because he had so much spirit ; he lived before time.

GEORGE. I think they reckoned from his birth, so that we might always remember him.

MR. ALCOTT. Does it serve that purpose to you ? — How many think of Jesus Christ, that his birth was a great event, and that his life has a great deal to do with your life, whenever you date a letter ?

AUGUSTINE. I shall always think of it after this.

MR. ALCOTT. The Mahometans date from a circumstance in the life of Mahomet, which is called the *Hegira*, an Arabic word meaning *Flight*. The Romans dated from the building of their city. The government of the United States dates from the Declaration of Independence. How many of you think the birth of Jesus Christ was an event of sufficient importance to spread over all time ?

(*They held up hands.*)

Pre-existence
of Spirit. Was there any difference between your birth and his ?

GEORGE. I had not so much spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Did his spirit live before his body ?

GEORGE. Yes, it lived with God.

MR. ALCOTT. Did your spirit live before your body ?

GEORGE. Yes, it lived in God's spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Was your spirit born at the same time with that of Jesus Christ ?

FRANKLIN. I think Jesus was born when God was born.

LEMUEL. I think Jesus and God and all our spirits were born at the same time together.

Eternity
of Spirit. MR. ALCOTT. Were they born in time or
in eternity ?

LEMUEL. Our spirits were born in eterni-
ty, but our bodies at different times.

Incarnation of
Spirit in Body. MR. ALCOTT. Do you know of any word
which expresses the idea of a spirit's taking
on a body ? I do not mean to ask you
what a body's coming forth into this world all formed
and perfected is ; for we know that that is birth. —
But there was a moment when the spirit first took flesh
upon itself and began to build a body around itself. —
Have you ever heard the word *incarnation* ?

FRANKLIN. Yes, I have heard that word.

MR. ALCOTT. It means taking on flesh. It is de-
rived from a word that means *of the flesh*.

GEORGE K. I always wondered where our bodies
were built up. I should not think they could be built in
heaven, because there is no matter there.

Analogy and
Emblem of
Human Birth. MR. ALCOTT. The rose is first given to us
as a seed, and, by certain laws of God, it
unfolds itself when it is put in the ground,
and the rain and dews fall on it, and the air is ab-
sorbed into it, and the sunshine lies upon it, and
many invisible particles of matter become incorpo-
rated with it. So the seed of a human being is placed
in the midst of matter which nourishes it, and it grows
and becomes perfected. What is the body builder ?

FRANKLIN. The spirit.

Spirit organ-
izes Body. MR. ALCOTT. What makes the flesh come
on ?

LEMUEL. The spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. And what takes the flesh off ?

LEMUEL. The spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. What makes it go off so quick, sometimes ?

LEMUEL. Indulgence.

MR. ALCOTT. What does temperance
Organic Law of
Temperance. do ?

FRANKLIN. It keeps the flesh on.

EMMA. It does not always keep it on.

MR. ALCOTT. No ; the spirit, after it incarnates itself, and has perfected a body, begins to cast off its old garments, whose decay we can see with our eyes. Which acts, spirit or body ? and which is acted upon ? that is, which yields and obeys ?

JOHN D. Spirit acts.

SEVERAL. And body obeys.

MR. ALCOTT. Which is the Father, or Original ?

SEVERAL. Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Which is the son, or derived ?

SEVERAL. Body.

MR. ALCOTT. Jesus called the spirit "the Son of God," and the body "the Son of Man." When the body is disobedient, what happens ?

GEORGE K. Punishment must come.

MR. ALCOTT. Two of the boys complained
Violation of
Organic Laws. of the headache to day. Do any of you think that when pain comes upon the body, some law has been broken ; that the body has disobeyed the spirit ?

(Several held up hands.)

EMMA. Then there must have been wrong in me, for I have the headache every day.

MR. ALCOTT. The wrong may be an involuntary one, one that arises, not from wrong intention, or want of a sense of duty, but from ignorance. Sometimes there are inherited tendencies to diseases, that arise from the faults of parents and grand parents. Sometimes an evil produced in the
Hereditary
Disease.

body by intemperance may sleep in a son, and never meet with any impulse from his disobedience, voluntary or involuntary, but burst out again in a grandson. — This happens in families where the gout occurs very often.

How many of you think, whenever there is suffering, that there must be wrong, either in the person suffering, or in others around him, or in things ?

EMMA. I think the wrong must be in myself.

MR. ALCOTT. When I suffer pain, I generally can discover the reason, and by doing differently remove it. In looking over these forefathers of Jesus, we find the names of some of the best men of whom an account is given in the Old Testament, Abraham, David, &c.; yet all of them did wrong sometimes.

Which of you think that if you govern your passions and temper, you shall be likely to live longer ?

(Several.)

Longevity
of Body.

God has so made matter, that if it does not obey the spirit, and if the spirit does not obey God, and govern the matter in which it lives according to God's will, the body shall waste and decay prematurely. If your spirit likes your body more than it loves God, and assumes upon itself improper things, by eating at wrong times, or too much, or what is not fit for it ; or by drinking those drinks, which heat and pollute the blood ; or if your spirit, through want of self government, throws your body into convulsions of anger, the body will surely be wasted before its time. — If you want to live long, should you strive to be quiet, gentle, and temperate, or be boisterous, obstinate, and passionate ?

LEMUEL. Quiet.

MR. ALCOTT. But not too quiet. Indolence and want of exercise make the body a grave for the spirit.

GEORGE K. Mr. Alcott, suppose a child was told by other children, when its parents were away, to do wrong ; and it was too young to know what to do itself ; and so it did what its parents would have told it was wrong ; would that child suffer for doing wrong ?

MR. ALCOTT. The effect on the child would be injurious ; he might be made sick by it, or fretful, and his temper be spoiled ; but the parents who neglected, or the children who made him do wrong, would be responsible for the consequences, if they did it intentionally.

Laws of Life. Now let us return to the subject. Spirit is the body builder ; Temperance is the body preserver ; Self-indulgence is the body waster ; Spirit acts on and through matter. Do any of you think that matter is solid, unalterable, unyielding to the agency of spirit ?

(Several held up hands.)

Transfiguration of Spirit in Matter. Or is it soft, yielding, fluid, easily moved, continually affected by the spirit that stirs in it, and shapes it to our senses ?

(Most held up their hands.)

Is your body what it was an hour ago in all respects ?

(None.)

Is any piece of matter in the same state that it was an hour ago ?

(They instanced pieces of furniture.)

JOSIAH. Things are not in the same places, because the earth is moving round the sun.

MR. ALCOTT. And the cause of all movement is Spirit. Not only the whole universe is in motion, but every thing is in a state of change within it. There are sciences, which teach how the particles of bodies are mingled together, and how these particles are of different qualities from each other, and from the com-

pound wholes which they make ; and that changes of their relative positions and proportions are constantly going on ; that all things which seem to be solid are continually wasting and becoming air ; and that the invisible air is at all times being absorbed into solid bodies, and becoming visible.

Spirit acts in two great laws, Renovation and Decay. Growth is Spirit, organizing

Laws of Renovation and Decay.

bodies, or building them up. — Spirit, taking down the solid body, is Death. You are now in the process of growth. Your spirits are every day appropriating to their own use, for their own manifestation, various substances, which become incorporated with your bodies, by means of these laws established by God, and which you ought to endeavour to know and obey. Bye and bye, your growth will be completed, and then the law of decay will begin to act, and the waste and dissolution will take place, which ends in death. If these laws of God were understood and observed by every spirit, there would be no pain. We should be born without giving pain, should live without pain, and should lie down and die, as if sinking into a sweet sleep. The laws of renovation and decay would each bring pleasurable sensations.

FRANKLIN. Do you think you are beginning to go down, to decay ?

MR. ALCOTT. I suppose I am beginning to die.

FRANKLIN. The spirit is climbing up while the body is going down.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes ; and Paul once said that he “ died daily ; that while the outward man (or body) decayed, the inward man (or spirit) was renewed day by day.” By the laws of incarnation, Spirit is transfused through bodies, first building them up, then taking them down.

Mutability
of Matter.

When Jesus was near dying, he called his disciples, and talked of the mutability of all things outward, of the destruction of the temple, Jerusalem, of empires, and of worlds ; and then he spoke of the love, and faith, and living spirit, which had nothing to do with death, and which changed in nothing save its earthly garments. This temple that we are in will decay ; it is decaying. Some men first planned it, then set others to collecting materials to execute their plan, who shaped their thought at last into this large building ; this temple preëxisted in their spirits. But already it has mouldered some.

FRANKLIN. Is it renewing too ?

MR. ALCOTT. No ; for there is nothing within it, to contend, by a perpetual endeavour at renovation, against the principle of decay, as there is in the human body. The principle of renovation in a human body contends hard against the principle of decay, even when it is accelerated by self-indulgence. God contends with the drunken man, while he is accelerating decay, by his intemperance.

Transfusion
of Spirit.

Do you think God flowed through all the forefathers of Jesus down to Joseph ?

(Many thought so.)

Do you think his spirit flowed on through your ancestors, and down to you ?

(They thought so.)

Can you say that there is any of God in you ?

(Several held up hands.)

Is your spirit in him ?

(Yes.)

If you are self-indulgent, do you think your spirit will remain in him, connect your body with him, and thus keep it pure, healthy, and full of innocent pleasure ?

(*None raised hands.*)

But your spirits may fall away from him, and so your bodies become diseased, and waste away in pain ?

Subject. MR. ALCOTT. What has been our subject to-day ?

AUGUSTINE. Genealogy.

FRANKLIN. Incarnation.

MARTHA. The supernatural in the natural.

ANDREW. Changes of body in time.

GEORGE K. Changes of matter in time.

GEORGE B. Decay and building up of matter in time.

MR. ALCOTT. Spirit working in matter ; organizing fathers and children. Now all may hold up their hands who have been as much interested in this conversation as they expected to be.

ALL. A great deal more.

MR. ALCOTT. And yet our subject has been one of great difficulty. The connexion between the body and the soul is mysterious, and hard to be understood.*

* The reader will observe that this conversation is more connected, and satisfactory, than most of those which precede it. It may have been more so, in reality. Yet the impression, which it leaves in the mind, arises, chiefly, from the fact, that the record is fuller and more complete. ED.

CONVERSATION XVII.

BAPTISM OF SPIRIT.

TEMPERANCE.

The Ministry of John Baptist, from the Sacred Text. — Idea and Emblem of Purification. — Spiritual and Physical Purification. — Mission of Temperance. — Repentance. — Spiritual Life. — Righteousness. — Temperance. — Justice. — Confession of Sin. — Pharisees and Sadducees. — Retribution.

Review. MR. ALCOTT. How old was Jesus at our last conversation, and where was he then?

SEVERAL. Thirty years of age. He was at Nazareth.

MR. ALCOTT. How old was John, whom we left a baby in the hill country of Judea?

SEVERAL. Six months older.

MR. ALCOTT. They were both old enough to become teachers. The Jews did not allow any of their nation to be teachers till they were thirty.

He then read

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN BAPTIST.

MATT. iii. 1-13. MARK i. 2-9. LUKE iii. 1-19.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 26. Julian Period, 4739.
Wilderness of Judæa.

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--|
| Luke iii. 1. | Repentance. | Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, |
| Luke iii. 2. | | Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. |

Before the Vulgar Æra, 26. Julian period, 4739.
The Wilderness of Judæa.

- Matt. iii. 1. In those days came * John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa.
- Mark. i. 4. † John did baptize in the wilderness,
- Luke iii. 3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,
- Matt. iii. 2. And saying, Repent ye : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
- Mark i. 2. As it is written in the prophets, ‡ Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.
- Luke iii. 4. As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying,
§ The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight.
- Luke iii. 5. Every valley shall be filled,
And every mountain and hill shall be brought low ;
And the crooked shall be made straight,
And the rough ways *shall be* made smooth ;
And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.
- Luke iii. 6. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins ; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.
- Matt. iii. 4. || And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem,
- Mark i. 5. and all the region round about Jordan,
- Matt. iii. 5. And were
- Matt. iii. 6. all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.
- Mark. i. 5. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism —
- Matt. iii. 7. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him —
- Luke iii. 7. he said unto them, ¶ O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ?
- Matt. iii. 8. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance :
- Matt. iii. 9. And think not to say within yourselves, ** We have Abraham to *our* father : for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
-

* Mark i. 1.

† Luke iii. 1.

‡ Mal. iii. 1.

§ Isa. xl. 3.

|| Matt. iii. 5.

¶ Matt. xii. 34.

** John. viii. 39.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 26. Julian Period, 4739.
The Wilderness of Judæa.

- Matt. iii. 1. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees :
* therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit
is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
- Luke iii. 10. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do
then ?
- Luke iii. 11. He answereth and saith unto them, † He that hath two
coats, let him impart to him that hath none ; and he that
hath meat, let him do likewise.
- Luke iii. 12. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto
him, Master, what shall we do ?
- Luke iii. 13. And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is
appointed you.
- Luke iii. 14. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And
what shall we do ? And he said unto them, Do violence to
no man, neither accuse *any* falsely ; and be content with
your wages.
- Luke iii. 15. And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused
in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not ;
- Luke iii. 16. John answered, saying unto *them* all, ‡ I indeed baptize
you —
with water
- Matt. iii. 11. unto repentance, but
- Mark i. 7. there cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of
whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose ;
- Matt. iii. 11. whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : he shall baptize you
with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire :
- Matt. iii. 12. Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge
his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner ; but he will
burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.
- Luke iii. 18. And many other things in his exhortation preached he
unto the people.

Mr. Alcott then asked what thoughts the reading suggested ?

Idea and Emblem of Purification.

JOSEPH. I should think John could baptize with the same thing as Jesus did, with the Holy Ghost, but he only baptized with water.

* Matt. vii. 19. † James ii. 15. 1 John iii. 17. ‡ Matt. iii. 11.

MR. ALCOTT. What does baptize with water mean ?

JOSIAH. I don't know, but baptizing with the Holy Ghost means preaching.

MR. ALCOTT. What does the word *baptize* mean ?

JOSEPH. It means purify.

MR. ALCOTT. Why do people purify — baptize with water ?

JOSEPH. To clean the body.

MR. ALCOTT. What does purify with fire mean ?

JOSEPH. I don't know.

LEMUEL. To baptize with fire means to purify with love, and baptizing with the Holy Ghost means preaching with love, and baptizing with water is an emblem of these.

JOSIAH. John did not mean Jesus would use outward fire, but he wanted to express how very powerful Jesus was over every thing.

GEORGE K. Yes ; John meant that Jesus had power like unquenchable fire.

EDWARD J. I think Jesus baptizing with fire meant the kind of punishment he would inflict.

FRANKLIN. Baptizing with water was an emblem, and baptizing with fire was punishment, and baptizing with the Holy Ghost was the miracles which he did.

FREDERIC. Baptizing with the Holy Ghost is the love of Jesus ; baptizing with fire is the punishment of conscience.

NATHAN. Baptizing with fire means to make our spirits pure.

WELLES. Water is an emblem of spiritual purity. The fire that the tree is to be cast into, is our conscience when we have done something to repent of. Jesus, trying to make them better by talking and preaching, is baptizing them with the Holy Ghost.

JOHN D. Baptizing with fire is conscience. Baptizing with Holy Ghost is love.

MARTHA. Holy Ghost is love. Fire means the punishment of conscience. Water is an emblem, meaning to cleanse the spirits of people of their sins, so as to be ready for the love of Jesus.

ELLEN. To baptize with water is to cleanse the body ; with fire is to cleanse the spirit ; with the Holy Ghost includes both purifications.

EMMA. Baptism with water purifies the body, cleanses it. It is an emblem.

ALEXANDER. Baptizing with the Holy Ghost means giving them faith in himself and in God.

SAMUEL R. John cleansed the body ; Jesus the spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Will you explain what you mean ?

SAMUEL R. I do not know how to express it.

MR. ALCOTT. Is the fire, that is meant here, such fire as is in the grate ?

SAMUEL R. No ; fire is the emblem of conscience.

JOHN B. Fire means reproach of conscience ; baptism of water, purification of body ; Holy Ghost means love.

CHARLES. Just as water purifies the body, love purifies the spirit. Water means innocence. Fire means conscience. Fire is stronger than water. When you pray to God and God hears and answers, that is purification by the Holy Ghost.

AUGUSTINE. Baptizing with water is to show how the spirit should be made clean ; baptizing with fire means when we are punished to make us better.

MR. ALCOTT. Is there any baptism of fire here ?

CHARLES. Yes, we have a firey baptism when we punish you on your hand.

SEVERAL. Conscience is a firey baptism.

FRANKLIN. Very often there is the fiery baptism in my conscience.

MR. ALCOTT. Is the boy who eats or drinks improperly baptizing his body with water and purifying it ?

GEORGE K. No ; conscience punishes the body and cleanses it.

Spiritual and
Physical Pu-
rification.

MR. ALCOTT. Are there any means now used to preach this baptism of water ?

(*No answer.*)

Does a person who drinks too much, purify, baptize his body ?

ALL. No.

MR. ALCOTT. Are there any Temperance Societies, and what are they for ?

CHARLES. To make the people temperate, to purify the body, to baptize it.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think any one could love Christ and receive his holy spirit, who lived a life of self-indulgence ?

CHARLES. No indeed.

Mission of
Temperance.

MR. ALCOTT. Holiness baptizes the body, and fits it for the use of the soul. Thus you see why the doctrines of repentance and purification were preached to introduce Jesus. No one could understand the subjects upon which Jesus was to preach, till his mind was purified. John's was a Mission of Temperance, to purify the body ; that of Jesus was to renovate the spirit. John's habits were correspondent ; his dress, his manner of life, his food, all taught the same doctrine as his teachings. He said, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand ; practise what I teach, and then you shall be able to apprehend another teacher, superior to me.

Repentance. MARTHA. What does repent mean ?

MR. ALCOTT. To be sorry for sin, and to do wrong no more. But how shall we be kept from doing wrong any more ?

MARTHA. We must ask God, and he will help us.

MR. ALCOTT. Is that all ?

MARTHA. No ; we must leave off doing wrong things.

MR. ALCOTT. Repentance is necessary to prepare the mind for spiritual truth. There must be a feeling of sorrow about those habits of body and mind from which we are to be freed ; and sense of a need to quicken the mind, and fit it to receive truth. This is contrition, and it leads to repentance.

Spiritual Life. What is meant by " the kingdom of heaven is at hand " ?

MARTHA. It means Jesus is going to preach the truth.

MR ALCOTT. And why was it necessary to repent in order to understand the truth ?

MARTHA. Because, if the people went on in their wicked ways, they would not want to hear, but if they were purified, they would want to hear Jesus.

FRANK. Jesus was the king of the kingdom.

MR. ALCOTT. Is the kingdom of heaven near or far off ?

AUGUSTINE. A great way off the bad.

OTHERS. Within.

OTHERS. It is a state of mind.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you possess it ?

JOSIAH. I do not think I have ever been in it.

MR. ALCOTT. Have you not been sorry for bad feelings, given them up, and loved ?

JOSIAH. Why, sometimes.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you have felt the sorrow of repentance, sorry that you needed punishment ; that you had done the wrong thing, had so injured your spirits ?

(*No answer.*)

What is meant by "the voice of one crying," &c.?

GEORGE K. He is called a voice because he preached,

Righteousness. MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by paths being made straight ?

GEORGE K. Straight paths are goodness ; falsehood is crooked, truth is straight ; flattery is crooked, as it says in Pilgrim's Progress.

AUGUSTINE. Flattery looks straight and smooth, but it is winding.

MR. ALCOTT. John preached righteousness, repentance, purification, temperance, for these prepared the soul to apprehend the kingdom of heaven within it.

LEMUEL. I think he was temperate and preached temperance.

Temperance and Justice. MR. ALCOTT. Yes, and temperance means a great deal ; it means more than not to eat and drink too much ; it means, to avoid all excess. He told the people not to love outward things too much. He said, "he that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none ; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." He said to the publicans, who were toll gatherers for the Roman rulers, and who were liable to abuse their office, "Exact no more than is appointed you." He said to the soldiers, who were apt to be intemperate, violent, and unreasonable, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." But intemperance in all the passions usually begins by excess in eating and drinking. Moses in his law had a great many

rules to keep the Jews from eating what would hurt them. He forbade a great many kinds of meat, and especially pork, because it was hurtful in that climate. In all climates it is so. Some people cannot eat it at all. Your eating has much to do with your temper and disposition. Children are sometimes very cross after they have eaten a great dinner. Robbers and murderers often indulge in excess before they go to execute their wicked plans.

RECORDER. I heard a lawyer say, that he never knew of any capital crime tried in the courts, in which the criminals were not proved to have assisted their powers of execution, at least, by drinking ardent spirit.

Baptism and
Confession of
Sin.

MR. ALCOTT. And they all were baptized in Jordan, "confessing their sins."

EMMA. You cannot get rid of your sins if you do not confess them, and then you are baptized.

Pharisees and
Sadducees.

MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by "generation of vipers"?

GEORGE K. People who were bad.

FRANKLIN. People who were spiteful.

MR. ALCOTT. Vipers are poisonous, and John was thinking of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who by their false doctrine poisoned the people. The Pharisees were believers in traditions; they were superstitious; they were servants of custom, and believed in doing outward things, without reference to what was within. They were ostentatious, multiplied ceremonies, were bigots. They believed in Fate, not God, and in transmigration of souls, which was their immortality. The Sadducees believed in freedom from Fate, but not in immortality, nor spirit; they thought the soul died with the body. There are people of our time, whose opinions are very much like each of these Jewish sects. These

people thought that the good that could come to them was for Abraham's sake, and they thought their being Abraham's descendants freed them from personal holiness.

What is meant by "bring forth fruits worthy" &c.?

MARTHA. Fruits are right actions, holiness.

MR. ALCOTT. What by "the axe is laid
Retribution. at the foot of the trees"?

EMMA. The trees mean the spirits of men, and the axe is trial — the trials of life.

ALEXANDER. The fire is conscience, which burns up the naughty things; the chaff is the body.

MR. ALCOTT. The fire means the discipline of life perhaps. What is meant by the latchet which John was not "worthy to unloose"?

GEORGE K. John was not half so good as Jesus.

MARTHA. John knew some of the people overrated him, and feared they would not attend to Jesus enough.

(Mr. Alcott read a paraphrase, and remarked on the general subject of the conversation. He adverted also to the subject of the next.)

CONVERSATION XVIII.

SPIRITUAL VISION.

BLESSEDNESS.

The Baptism of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Emblem of Innocence. — Emblem of Humility. — Spiritual Insight. — Voice of Conscience. — Ideal Types. — Idea of Angels. — Angelic Vision. — Original Holiness. — Emblem of Repentance.

Review. MR. ALCOTT. Where did we leave John the Baptist ?

JOSIAH. He was preaching in the wilderness about Jesus being superior to himself.

ANOTHER. And talking of the three baptisms.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you remember about the baptisms ?

CHARLES. That fire and water were emblematic, but that the Holy Spirit was not emblematic, for it was not material.

Mr. Alcott then read

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

MATT. iii. 13 to the end. MARK i. 9, 10, 11. LUKE iii. 21, 22, and part of 23.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 26. Julian Period, 4739.

Bethabara.

Mark i. 9.	Baptism.	* And it came to pass in those days, when all
Luke iii. 21.		the people were baptized,
Mark i. 9.		that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee,
Matt. iii. 13.	to Jordan unto John,	to be baptized of him.

* Matt. iii. 13.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 26. Julian Period, 4739.

Bethabara.

- Matt. iii. 14. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ?
- Matt. iii. 15. And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him :
- Mark i. 9. And [he] was baptized of John in Jordan.
- Matt. iii. 16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water :
- Mark i. 10. And straightway coming up out of the water ;
- Luke iii. 21. and praying,
- Matt. iii. 16. lo !
- Mark i. 10. he saw the heavens opened
- Matt. iii. 16. unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove,
- Luke iii. 22. in a bodily shape, like a dove,
- Matt. iii. 16. and lighting upon him :
- Matt. iii. 17. And lo !
- Mark i. 11. there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
- Luke iii. 23. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age.

He then asked the usual question.

Idea and
Emblem of
Innocence
and Purity.

AUGUSTINE. Was the spirit in the shape of a dove, or did it descend like a dove ?

MR. ALCOTT. You have the same means of judging that I have.

AUGUSTINE. I should think that the heavens opening was a sort of vision.

JOSIAH. The sky opened, and a white dove larger than other doves came from heaven. God sent it, but I do not know why he sent a dove.

GEORGE K. He sent a dove because it represents love. I think the angel Gabriel was in the dove. It stood on Jesus. I do not know what it means by the heavens opening. The voice came either from the dove, or from heaven above the sky.

EMMA. The dove represents purity. I think the voice was within the conscience of Jesus.

ELLEN. I think the dove represents love and innocence. God put love in that and sent it to Jesus, to express his innocence. God was pleased with Jesus for his answer to John.

JOHN B. I think the dove represents innocence, but I do not think as George does, that it came from above the sky, but only from the sky. It was not a common dove. God formed a spirit into a dove and sent it to Jesus, because he liked Jesus better than any body else, for he was better.

ANDREW. I think John and Jesus saw a vision ; it was secret to them ; and no other person saw it. It was an angel that came ; but God did not want the people to see an angel, and it appeared as a dove, which was a common thing to the people. The voice was within their souls.

MR. ALCOTT. Why should it be a dove, and not a serpent ?

ANDREW. Because a dove could fly, and a serpent could not.*

* The mind of this child is altogether unique. When it acts entirely of itself, it follows the highest law of imagination. All his thoughts "body" themselves forth ; and all the forms of nature speak to him. He never abstracts ; yet he is always in the spiritual.

Connected with this intellectual structure, he has a fine eye for drawing, and an obedient hand ; and thus seems armed at all points, for communicating with his race, through the canvass or marble. His character was once given by the children, in the most natural way. Mr. Alcott was reading over a list of the disciples, and saying, like Lemuel, like Josiah, &c., of each name. When he came to Nathaniel, he hesitated, and the boys spoke out, all round the class, "like Andrew !" It was a

EDWARD J. A dove means goodness, innocence.

CHARLES. I think of a dove in the midst of rays of light, with an olive branch in its mouth, and on its leaves are the words, "this is my beloved son," and after that, the rays always stayed round the head of Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. That is your fancy.

FRANKLIN. There were rays round the dove, and angels in the rays, though they could not be seen ; and it was these angels in the rays that sung, "This is my beloved son."

SAMUEL R. The dove came from without, I think, and the voice from within.

MARTHA. The dove was the sign of purity and peace.

MR. ALCOTT. Did that dove ever come to you ?

(No answer.)

Or any thing like it ?

(No answer.)

Did your conscience never say that you had done right ?

MARTHA. Oh yes ; sometimes.

LUCIA. I thought, that as John baptized to show that sins were washed out, it was not appropriate for him to baptize one who was freer from sin than himself, and that was the reason he said what he did to Jesus, as if he would change places with him.

coincidence confirmatory, that I had anticipated them in my own mind, some minutes before, and hoped Mr. Alcott would be reminded of him, by "the Israelite in whom was no guile."

The reader loses a great deal of natural commentary on the conversation, in losing the manner of the children, which cannot be printed ; but in no case is the loss more unimaginable, than in that of Andrew. It would be impossible to describe the difference of manner between the two last answers. REC.

ELLEN. Was Jesus any more pure after he was baptized than before ?

MR. ALCOTT. I do not often give an opinion. What do you think about that ?

ELLEN. I do not think he could be purer, but he was not proud of his goodness, and thought he might be better — he was humble, the holy spirit had made him good.

Emblem of
Humility.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did John refuse to baptize Jesus ?

CHARLES. Because he thought himself unworthy to touch him. Jesus had already been baptized by the Holy Ghost and was perfect, and did not need a baptism which was only emblematic of what he already had internally. But Jesus said he wanted to give a perfect example outwardly, as well as be perfect inwardly.

FRANKLIN. Jesus was baptized, to teach the people humility.

WELLES. It was humble to be baptized with water, when he was already baptized by the Holy Ghost, and the dove descended because he had humbled himself. I seem to see Jesus come out of the water upon the grass, and a dove larger than an eagle descend upon him, and then the voice comes from heaven, and John stands in astonishment. A few people standing near saw the dove, but hardly any heard the voice.

Spiritual
Insight.

CHARLES. Heaven means where love and truth are. I cannot express what I mean.

I suppose the opening of the sky was emblematic of the opening of the spirit.

AUGUSTINE. The opening of heaven was seeing more clearly into his own state of mind.

SEVERAL. I do not understand what it means.

ELLEN. The sky hides heaven from our view.

MR. ALCOTT. What did Jesus mean when he said afterwards, "the kingdom of heaven is within you." If the dove came upon Jesus from within, why does he say it descended?

LUCIA. To make it clear. We are down low, that is, without so much virtue; and all elevating things are said to be up high. The spirit is always said to descend.

MR. ALCOTT. So the word *descend* is emblematic? Some of you have said the voice was within, and some, that it was without.

Voice of
Conscience. LUCIA. God never speaks, except within the conscience.

WELLES. Not now; but he did in the Bible days.

ANDREW. It was Jesus' conscience that spoke.

EDWARD J. God spoke. Conscience is the spirit's voice.

MR. ALCOTT. There is very often an illusion of the senses about heaven.

AUGUSTINE. People look up when they pray.

MR. ALCOTT. That may be emblematic. When you say the Lord's prayer, do you think of your "Father" who is by the stars, or, your "Father" within your spirits?

(No answer.)

The spirit of God descended, and lighted on Jesus. What does that mean?

Ideal Types. JOSIAH. The spirit of God descends on all, I think, whatever their characters are, but takes a different form to the bad—a dragon for instance.

MR. ALCOTT. Is the shape of the dragon like the naughty person's mind?

JOSIAH. Yes; the spirit descends on a baby like a dove, and on a murderer, like a great giant. But it is

different now from what it was in old times. We do not see such emblems with our eyes ; they come now in conscience, and in our dreams. .

MR. ALCOTT. Which do you think is the best way ?

JOSIAH. Both are good ways. God takes different ways at different times ; but it is all the same in the end.

MR. ALCOTT. Were those better people who saw these things with their eyes ?

Idea of Angels. JOSIAH. No ; I have seen angels in my spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Were you ever an angel ?

JOSIAH. When I was born.

MR. ALCOTT. Are you one now ?

JOSIAH. 'The body is never an angel ; the spirit is always angelic ; a little at least.

LUCIA. I think when a baby is just born it looks like an angel, body and all ; but I know its body is not an angel.

Angelic
Vision.

MR. ALCOTT. And Jesus said "their angels do always behold the face of my Father in heaven." They are angels, although they begin to look out upon the earth, also, with bodily eyes. Their vision is still heavenly.

Original
Holiness.

LUCIA. We call Jesus the Son of God ; could we not say Socrates was almost the Son of God ?

MR. ALCOTT. Almost perhaps. But Socrates did not know so much as Jesus. And Socrates tells us that he lost his holiness, but Jesus did not.

LUCIA. I know Jesus was better than Socrates. I did not mean that Socrates was an equally beloved son, but a son.

MR. ALCOTT. Socrates passed through the fiery baptism of repentance, and the water-baptism of temperance, in order to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, which Jesus had from his birth.

LUCIA. If you do wrong once, it cannot be said that you have Perfection.

LEMUEL. A person, doing wrong but
Emblem of
Repentance. once, is a foul spring; but the foul particles may settle down, and then it will be clear again.

MANY. And they need do wrong no more.

MR. ALCOTT. That would prevent more foul matter from getting in. But what is to be done with the particles that are there?

(A long pause.)

ANDREW. You can flow away from them and leave them.

LUCIA. I think there is pure water under the mud and sand, which springs up, and softens it, and carries off the muddy particles, and leaves them somewhere, and so flows clear, and the spring is clear too.

MR. ALCOTT. What makes the water spring up and flow away? Whence comes the current?

LEMUEL. It comes from God. God is always helping.

(Mr. Alcott closed by reading a paraphrase.)

CONVERSATION XIX.

SPIRITUAL SUPREMACY.

SELF-SUBORDINATION.

Review. — Temptation of Jesus, from Sacred Text. — Personality of Evil. — Origin of Evil. — Hereditary Evil. — Appetites. — Self-Sacrifice. — Passions.

Review. MR. ALCOTT. We spoke last of John's preaching the baptism of repentance, purification, preparation for holiness.

LEMUEL. We talked of the emblem of an impure spring.

MR. ALCOTT. What should you think such baptism, as we now have in churches, would naturally lead to?

CHARLES. I should think it would make a person more conscientious; if he was old enough to know any thing about it.

MR. ALCOTT. Where did we leave Jesus?

SAMUEL T. Just come out of the water at Jordan.

Mr. Alcott read

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

MATT. iv. 1-11. MARK iv. 12, 13 LUKE iv. 1-13.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 26. Julian Period, 4739.
Wilderness.

Luke iv. 1.	Temptation.	And *Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan: and was led by the spirit into the wilderness.
-------------	-------------	--

* Matt. iv. 1.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 26. Julian Period, 4739.

Wilderness. — Jerusalem.

- Mark i. 12. * And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness,
 Matt. iv. 1. to be tempted of the devil.
 Mark i. 13. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan,
 Luke iv. 2. Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing.
 Matt. iv. 2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered :
 Matt. iv. 3. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.
 Luke iv. 3. command this stone that it be made bread.
 Luke iv. 4. And Jesus answered him, saying, † It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.
 Matt. iv. 4. that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
 Matt. iv. 5. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,
 Matt. iv. 6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down
 Luke iv. 9. from hence :
 Luke iv. 10. For ‡ it is written,
 He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee :
 Luke iv. 11. And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up,
 Lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.
 Luke iv. 12. And Jesus answering said unto him,
 Matt. iv. 7. It is written again, § Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
 Matt. iv. 8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;
 Luke iv. 5. in a moment of time.
 Luke iv. 6. And the devil said unto him,
 Matt. iv. 9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee,
 Luke iv. 6. All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them : for that is delivered unto me ; and to whomsoever I will I give it.
 Luke iv. 7. If thou therefore wilt worship me,
 Matt. iv. 9. if thou wilt fall down and worship me,
 Luke iv. 7. all shall be thine.
-

* Matt. iv. 1.

† Deut. viii. 3.

‡ Ps. xci. 11.

§ Deut. vi. 16.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 26. Julian Period, 4739.

- Luke iv. 8. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.
- Matt. iv. 11. Then the devil leaveth him,
- Luke iv. 13. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.
- Mark i. 13. And [he] was with the wild beasts ; and the angels ministered unto him.
- Matt. iv. 11. and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Personality
of Evil.

JOSEPH. I should not think Jesus would have gone into the wilderness where the devil could tempt him — I should think it was wrong to let the devil speak to him.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you mean by the devil ?

JOSEPH. He is the same as you read about in Milton's Paradise ; he lives in hell ; he tempts people to do wrong ; sometimes he tempts me, and makes me do wrong.

MR. ALCOTT. Does not Joseph make himself do wrong ?

JOSEPH. Yes ; but he causes me to.

MR. ALCOTT. When you tell him to go away earnestly, can you not help doing wrong ?

JOSEPH. Yes ; but if there were no Satan I never could do wrong.

MR. ALCOTT. Is not Joseph the Satan — have you not made a mistake in thinking the tempter was out of yourself ?

(*No answer.*)

Should you know that your goodness was real, unless you had the power to do wrong ? What do you think Satan is ?

JOSEPH. A great creature.

MR. ALCOTT. Who made him ?

JOSEPH. He made himself.

MR. ALCOTT. What did he make himself of ?

JOSEPH. Of the stuff that is in hell.

MR. ALCOTT. Who made that stuff ?

JOSEPH. God ; it was good stuff till it fell down from heaven. Satan was at first a good spirit, but he took some stuff and went down to hell and made his body out of it.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did he go ?

JOSEPH. He wanted something there. First God made him good, and then he saw something down in hell that he wanted.

MR. ALCOTT. What made him have such a naughty want ?

JOSEPH. It put on some good shape.

MR. ALCOTT. Who made the deceiving shape that gave the naughty wants ?

JOSEPH. It made itself — the place made itself.

MR. ALCOTT. I do not understand how places and things could make themselves.

(He said nothing.)

RECORDER. He seems to have an idea of the eternity of evil, founded on Milton's idea of the eternity of matter.

MR. ALCOTT. You do not make it out Joseph. But I think that your naughtiness begins in you — not in any body else.

Idea of
Temptation. GEORGE B. I do not see why Jesus let the devil tempt him.

MR. ALCOTT. Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness.

JOSEPH. I should think the spirit would have kept the devil away.

AUGUSTINE. I suppose the spirit permitted him to tempt, to see how Jesus could overcome temptation and trial.

EDWARD J. I should think Jesus would have sent him away sooner.

MR. ALCOTT. Did he not stay long enough to find out that Jesus was the strongest ?

EDWARD J. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Has he found that out about Edward yet ?

EDWARD J. No.

ALEXANDER. God made the devil on purpose to tempt people ; or, at least, when Satan had grown wicked, God used him as a tempter.

WELLES. The devil was made, so that God might see how people would act.

MR. ALCOTT. Could he not find out, without a devil ?

WELLES. If there was no devil, there would be no more merit in doing right than wrong ; there would be no conscience — or, at least, conscience would be of no use.

FREDERIC. I think the temptation was to show the devil that he could never get any advantage over Jesus. Jesus settled the matter with him.

MR. ALCOTT. Have you settled with the devil in this respect ?

FREDERIC. No.

NATHAN. I don't see why Jesus let the devil tempt him.

MR. ALCOTT. Did Jesus have a body, that could be hungry, and want something to eat ?

NATHAN. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Was that wrong ?

NATHAN. No.

MR. ALCOTT. What wrong thing was he tempted to do ?

NATHAN. To worship the devil.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think your hungry body ever tempted you to do something wrong ?

NATHAN. Yes, and I did wrong. I ate too much.

MR. ALCOTT. Was this the tempter that was in Paradise ?

LEMUEL. Yes ; and Jesus learnt to know good and evil by this trial.

MR. ALCOTT. What was the result of that eating in Paradise ?

LEMUEL. Adam and Eve learned to know good and evil, by doing wrong instead of right.

MR. ALCOTT. Action shows the contrast.

JOHN B. Satan is a wicked spirit — but it
Origin of Evil. is we who begin to do wrong.

MR. ALCOTT. Do we make the Satan within us ?

JOHN B. Yes ; we are Satans ourselves. He is connected somehow with our conscience.

MR. ALCOTT. Joseph, John has a different idea of Satan from you. He says we make Satans.

JOSEPH. I thought there was but one Satan who tempted.

MR. ALCOTT. Who else think that Satan is independent and lives out of the tempted souls ?

JOHN B. No ; he cannot, he has no body nor soul.

GEORGE K. God made one bad one to try the rest.

MR. ALCOTT. What did God make a bad one out of ?

GEORGE K. Wickedness.

MR. ALCOTT. Where did he get the wickedness ?

GEORGE K. He made it.

MR. ALCOTT. Goodness make wickedness ?

GEORGE K. Why you know Adam and Eve did wrong and that made wickedness.

MR. ALCOTT. Oh, so Adam and Eve, after all, were the Satan makers — they made the tempter that tempted them ?

SAMUEL T. All the bad things we do, make Satans.

JOSIAH. "Jesus being led by the spirit" expresses that Jesus went willingly to meditate; the devil was not a body; but that is a way to express that evil thoughts came — we call evil thoughts a devil.

MR. ALCOTT. Did Jesus expect these evil thoughts would come?

JOSIAH. No; the devil began with Adam
Hereditary Evil. and Eve, when they first had evil thoughts, and has increased and will increase by every body's evil thoughts, through generations and generations.

MR. ALCOTT. Did he increase by Jesus Christ?

JOSIAH. No; for Jesus was good. Jesus was just like God, only he had not so much power.

JOHN D. I think God made Satan to try people.

LUCIA and EMMA. We make it ourselves, I do not know how.

CHARLES. I think evil comes from seeing others have what we want; from envy.

MR. ALCOTT. There is a remarkable difference in your answers. Some of you think God made Satan without, and others think we make him within ourselves. Those of you who think the latter, are the ones who resist evil most bravely.

What was the first temptation of Jesus?

Appetites.

FREDERIC. He was inclined to eat bread; the inclination was the tempter.

MR. ALCOTT. Is it wrong to eat bread?

FREDERIC. It is giving way to the appetites.

EDWARD J. It would have seemed to be obeying Satan to make stones into bread.

JOSIAH. I do not see why it would be wrong for him to make stones into bread.

LEMUEL. He thought that if the devil could make him do any little thing, he would go and tell others that the Son of God obeyed him; and that would do harm.

Spiritual
Sustenance. MR. ALCOTT. What did Jesus' answer mean, "Man shall not live by bread alone"?

LUCIA. It means that the spirit is to be fed on the word of God, as the body is with bread.

MR. ALCOTT. How do you feed the spirit on the word of God?

LUCIA. When we give any thing to the poor, or resist any temptation.

RECORDER. Suppose there is a chance for your spirit to feed on some of these commands of God; and your body is hungry for food, which must you choose?

LUCIA. To feed the spirit if you can do but one.

RECORDER. Suppose you were starving for instance, and could get money to buy bread, by murdering another, which should you do?

LUCIA. Starve.

RECORDER. What life would you feed in that case?

LUCIA. My spirit's life — and that was what Jesus did here.

Self-Sacrifice. RECORDER. Did he ever have any other occasion of making this same choice?

CHARLES. Yes; when he was crucified.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you think you have lived on bread alone, rather than on the words of God, that give life?

(All held up hands.)

CHARLES. "Every word of God" means conscience.

Passions. MR. ALCOTT. Do you understand the second temptation?

JOSIAH. I do not see how Jesus could get up to the pinnacle of the temple. Evil thoughts could not put him there.

MR. ALCOTT. Did the devil take the body of Jesus up there?

LUCIA. Jesus must have thought of being up there.

ALEXANDER. I think the evil thought, that put him up there, was pride.

MR. ALCOTT. We must have another conversation on this subject. You have been somewhat inattentive to-day ; and we have not finished our conversation. Temptation is a subject hard to be understood in all its bearings. It takes a life to apprehend it. Evil is ever tempting all our faculties ; and few master it, holding the appetites and passions in subordination to conscience, the ruler of the spirit.

CONVERSATION XX.

SPIRITUAL SUPREMACY.

SELF-CONTROL.

Temptation of Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Idea of Temptation. — Vain Glory. — Passions. — Self-Subordination. — Emblem of Appetite and Passion. — Spiritual Support. — Worldly Ambition. — Spiritual Integrity. — Aspiration for the Perfect.

MR. ALCOTT. Can you think to-day ?
(*All held up hands.*)

What was the conversation upon last ?

CHARLES. The temptations of Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. We shall resume the subject to-day.

Mr. Alcott re-read

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

MATT. iv. 1-11. MARK iv. 12, 13. LUKE iv. 1-13.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 26. Julian Period, 4739.
Wilderness.

Luke iv. 1.	Temptation.	And *Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan: and was led by the spirit into the wilderness.
Mark i. 12	† And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness,	
Matt. iv. 1.	to be tempted of the devil.	
Mark i. 13.	And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan,	
Luke iv. 2.	Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing.	

* Matt. iv. 1.

† Matt. iv. 1.

Before the Vulgar Æra, 26. Julian Period, 4739.

Wilderness. — Jerusalem.

- Matt. iv. 2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered :
- Matt. iv. 3. And when the tempter came to him, he said, if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,
- Luke iv. 3. command this stone that it be made bread.
- Luke iv. 4. And Jesus answered him, saying, * It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.
- Matt. iv. 4. that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
- Matt. iv. 5. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,
- Matt. iv. 6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down
- Luke iv. 9. from hence :
- Luke iv. 10. For † it is written,
- He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee :
- Luke iv. 11. And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up,
- Lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.
- Luke iv. 12. And Jesus answering said unto him,
- Matt. iv. 7. It is written again, ‡ Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
- Matt. iv. 8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ;
- Luke iv. 5. in a moment of time.
- Luke iv. 6. And the devil said unto him,
- Matt. iv. 9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee,
- Luke iv. 6. All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them : for that is delivered unto me ; and to whomsoever I will I give it.
- Luke iv. 7. If thou therefore wilt worship me,
- Matt. iv. 9. if thou wilt fall down and worship me,
- Luke iv. 7. all shall be thine.
- Luke iv. 8. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.
- Mark. iv. 11. Then the devil leaveth him,
- Luke iv. 13. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.
- Mark i. 13. And [he] was with the wild beasts ; and the angels ministered unto him.
- Matt. iv. 11. and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.
-

* Deut. viii. 3.

† Ps. xci. 11.

‡ Deut. vi. 16.

Idea of
Temptation.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the meaning of the word *tempt*?

CHARLES. When things not your own are put in your way they tempt you.

FREDERIC. If you want to do something wrong and can scarce help it, you are tempted.

AUGUSTINE. It is not necessary to have a bad want. Jesus was tempted and he never had a bad want. He wanted something to eat, and that was not wrong.

GEORGE K. If somebody encourages you in a bad want, you are tempted.

JOSEPH. If any body urges you to do wrong, he tempts you.

EMMA. 'To want to do wrong is a temptation.

ELLEN. When any one tries to persuade you that what you know to be wrong is right, you are tempted.

NATHAN. I think if any body tells you to do any thing, which you think wrong, and you do it, you are tempted.

GEORGE K. Your appetites tempt you to do wrong.

CHARLES. A drunkard is tempted in that way.

SAMUEL R. And a drunkard tempts others.

FRANKLIN. After you have eaten enough, and something good comes on the table, you are tempted to eat too much.

MARTHA. Two boys may go into a confectionary, and one will persuade the other to buy something, because he hopes he will give him some.

FRANCIS. I once went into a grocer's shop with a boy, and he took some raisins out of a little barrel, went out, and the man did not see him.

MR. ALCOTT. Did you tell the man?

FRANK A. No; I was ashamed for him.

GEORGE K. I have seen a boy tempted to do wrong by being laughed at for doing right.

Vain Glory. MR. ALCOTT. That is the second temptation, perhaps, which comes from the love of praise, of having others like us. The other temptations mentioned were rather of the body, like the first temptation of Jesus. Do you think of any temptations coming from the mind?

FREDERIC. The mind tempts to show off.

MR. ALCOTT. How many have been tempted to do that in this school room, while conversing?

(Josiah and six others held up hands.)

When were you tempted to do so, Josiah?

JOSIAH. When I first came here, not lately.

MR. ALCOTT. Who always say things for the truth's sake, and not for display?

(All the rest rose.)

MR. ALCOTT. What else tempts from within the mind?

EMMA. Wrong opinions.

ELLEN. Bad feelings tempt to murder.

EDWARD J. One person succeeds in making another do wrong.

MR. ALCOTT. Is suffering a temptation to complain?

(They held up hands.)

CHARLES. Slaveholders are sometimes tempted by the power they have over their slaves.

ANOTHER. Money is a temptation.

Self Subor-
dination. MR. ALCOTT. What subdues all these temptations?

GEORGE K. Conscience.

MR. ALCOTT. Was there ever any one in whom conscience determined that body, mind, and soul should do no wrong?

EMMA. Yes; Jesus subdued all temptations.

MR. ALCOTT. He overcame the world.

EMMA. The world means temptations.

CHARLES. The world means outward things.

MR. ALCOTT. The world means all that tempts the spirit from its own law. Do you think pure spirit can be tempted ?

THE OLDER ONES. Jesus was tempted.

AUGUSTINE. We have not decided yet, whether it is Satan, or ourselves that tempts.

MR. ALCOTT. The desire, the ease of yielding, is Satan.

Emblem of
Appetites and
Passions. What may the wilderness be the emblem of ?

CHARLES. Solitude.

MR. ALCOTT. And the wild beasts that were there ?

CHARLES. Passions and appetites.

MR. ALCOTT. It is very common to represent passions by animals ; we say a person has a tiger heart ; John called the Jewish rulers vipers.

EMMA. We say, "harmless as a dove" — "docile as a lamb."

MR. ALCOTT. Some people think that the animal creation is designed to teach us what is the tendency of the various passions. In all nations there are fables, in which the passions are played off against each other, by means of animal emblems. Jesus went into solitude, perhaps, to meditate upon the passions, and think how each one tempted the spirit.

RECORDER. And by what principle each should be regulated.

Spiritual
Support. MR. ALCOTT. What does his "fasting and afterwards being an hungered" mean ?

CHARLES. His mind was excited at first, so that he did not want food.

MR. ALCOTT. His mind was so peaceful, so sustained by God, that he did not need it. I never want to eat,

when I am the most quietly happy. When one feels patient, he can wait for what he wants, without doing extraordinary things. Would it not have seemed impatience in Jesus to have turned the stones into bread? Would it not have seemed like distrusting God?

CHARLES. When any thing seems wanting to us outwardly, we should doubt ourselves, not God.

Worldly
Ambition.

MR. ALCOTT. What was the third temptation?

CHARLES. Bribery. The devil offered him the whole world.

MR. ALCOTT. What passion was addressed?

CHARLES. Avarice.

AUGUSTINE. I have a desire for money.

MR. ALCOTT. Was he tempted to exchange his heavenly kingdom for an earthly one?

CHARLES. To govern men's bodies, not their spirits.

MR. ALCOTT. The Genius of Jesus fitted him to be the greatest of monarchs and the richest of men.

FREDERIC. But he would not have had such real power, that would last, and increase always.

CHARLES. But if he had been a monarch he might have done a great deal of good.

MR. ALCOTT. Ah! that has been a temptation to many to get power—more power than they could use well. It is better not to go into temptation for the sake of doing good. Suppose Mr. Webster should say—I will humor people so that they shall make me President, and I will make up for doing wrong now, by governing well and doing good afterwards—would that be wise and right?

Spiritual
Integrity.

EMMA. No; because he might lose the desire to do right, if he did wrong now.

MR. ALCOTT. But suppose he says, No;

I will use all my genius in illustrating what is true, and take my chance about being President — how is that ?

ALL. That would be right.

MR. ALCOTT. Suppose a man does good things to be popular — does he serve the Lord ?

JOHN B. No.

CHARLES. We serve the Lord when we do good for conscience' sake.

MR. ALCOTT. What did he mean by "Get thee behind me" ?

Aspiration for
the Perfect.

EMMA. It means we must not serve for riches, or for honors.

MR. ALCOTT. But we must act according to our Idea of the Perfect, and say, get thee behind me, Appetite ; get thee behind me, Passion ; get thee behind me, Ambition. Perhaps this "high mountain" represented Ambition.

EMMA. My Sunday School Teacher told me that there was a tradition among the Jews, that the Messiah would come from the clouds of heaven ; and that the temptation of throwing himself from the pinnacle of the temple came out of that. If he had done it, he would have flattered their prejudices, and been received with honors as their Messiah.

MR. ALCOTT. Did Jesus ever do a miracle for display, or preach, to show his eloquence ?

ALL. No.

MR. ALCOTT. And so Jesus was tempted in all his nature. But we must close the conversation on this passage, for the present ; although we have not gone into the depths of it. There are inexhaustible meanings in it ; for it represents that struggle for self-mastery, which the soul is ever making, when faithful to the Divine Law of Perfection, which conscience is proclaiming in every faculty and function of our being.

Jesus subordinated the Body, Nature, and Life to this law. He overcame, and put all corporeal things under foot. And so should we strive to do. All Duty lies in striving after the Perfect.

CONVERSATION XXI.

SPIRITUAL REVERENCE.

HUMILITY.

John's Testimony to Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Sentiment of Reverence. — Forerunners. — Idea and Emblem of Retribution. — Recognition of Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. Where did we leave John and Jesus ?

SEVERAL. Jesus in the wilderness ; and John at Jordan.

Mr. Alcott pointed out the places on the map, and then read the

TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST TO JESUS.

JOHN i. 19-28.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 26. Reverence.
Julian Period,
4739.

Bethabara.

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou ?

20 And he confessed, and denied not ; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then ? Art thou Elias ? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet ? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou ? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself ?

* Matt. iii. 3.

23 * He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet ?

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water : but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not ;

* Matt. iii. 11.
Acts xix. 4.

27 * He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me,
whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan,
where John was baptizing.

Sentiment of
Reverence.

JOHN B. I did not understand about
untying the "shoe-latchet."

JOSIAH. John wanted to express in a
very strong way, how much greater Jesus was than
himself.

MR. ALCOTT. What is that mode of expression
called ?

EDWARD J. A parable.

ELLEN. An allegory.

FRANKLIN. An emblem.

LUCIA. A figurative expression.

CHARLES. Stooping to unloose a shoe-latchet ex-
presses feeling lowly in comparison, unworthy, humble.
When he says he was not worthy to untie the shoe-
latchet, he expresses a very great degree of elevation
in Jesus, and great unworthiness in himself. I think
John was very conscientious to deny that he was the
Christ. If he had loved to get power, he would have
taken advantage of their predisposition.

FREDERIC. Why did not John tell them his name
when they asked ?

MR. ALCOTT. Was it not more important to tell
them of his office ? What do you suppose he meant by
the "Voice of one crying," &c.?

FREDERIC. That he was a preacher of goodness.

AUGUSTINE. That he came from God.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did he not say, "I am a man
crying," &c.?

FRANKLIN. He did not feel worthy to call himself a
prophet.

GEORGE K. He was a preacher, and the most impor-
tant part of a preacher is his voice.

WELLES. He wanted to make them think only of his preaching.

EDWARD. He was a teacher.

JOSEPH. Why did not John say, I am a Forerunners. man come to tell about Jesus? I should think he would have done so.

CHARLES. He was a herald.

MR. ALCOTT. One great man usually prepares the way for another.

CHARLES. Fulton discovered steam power, others applied it.

ELLEN. Ministers prepare the way for the Judgment Day.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you mean by Judgment Day?
 Idea and Emblem of Retribution.

ELLEN. The last day, the day when the world is to be destroyed.

MR. ALCOTT. When will that day come?

CHARLES. The Day of Judgment is not any more at the end of the world than now. It is the Judgment of conscience every moment.

MR. ALCOTT. Ellen is thinking of burning worlds, open books, a Judge, an assembled universe.

LUCIA. I think the day of Judgment is when any one dies; the conscience judges.

JOSEPH. Mr. Alcott, it does not mean any particular day; but they wanted to express how very certain and real the judgment is which goes on all the time, and so they expressed it in this way, for no words can exactly express it.

JOHN B. Whenever we do wrong it is a day of judgment to us.

MARTHA. Death is necessary for complete judgment.

EDWARD J. Death is necessary for any judgment.

AUGUSTINE. I do not think the world is to be destroyed.

(Several agreed.)

CHARLES. Some people think there is a throne of diamonds for God, and that bodies will go up.

MR. ALCOTT. Cannot you take all these outward things away from the Judgment, Ellen, and still have Judgment left?

ELLEN. Yes, but I think there are these outward things besides.

Recognition
of Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. But to return. Why did they ask why he baptized?

GEORGE K. They seemed to think that only Elias or some prophet could baptize.

MR. ALCOTT. They perhaps understood him to say that he was no prophet. What does he mean when he says, "there is one among you whom you know not"?

WELLES. Where was Jesus?

AUGUSTINE. In the wilderness.

SOME. He was present among them there.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you think you would know a Saviour, if you saw one among you?

FRANK A. I should not know him, if he was dressed like other people.

MR. ALCOTT. Jesus was dressed like the others, and this was perhaps a good reason for their not knowing him?

CHARLES. I could tell him by his face.

WELLES. I could tell him by his actions.

MR. ALCOTT. We have had too much heat in the room to-day, yet some of you have been interested.

CONVERSATION XXII.

CONCILIATION OF SPIRIT.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

John's Testimony to Jesus, from the Sacred Text. — Emblem of Love and Innocence. — Spirit typified in Nature. — Idea and Emblem of Self-Sacrifice. — Purification by Self-Sacrifice. — Excellence. — John's Mission. — Spiritual Experience. — Idea of Absolute and Derivative Being. — Test of opinions. — Synopsis of the preceding conversations.

Mr. Alcott pointed out Bethabara, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Hebron, where John was born. Then he discriminated John the Evangelist, or Gospel writer, from John the Baptist. John the Evangelist was John the Baptist's disciple, and heard his first testimony to Jesus. Having explained these things, he read

JOHN'S TESTIMONY TO JESUS.

JOHN i. 29-34.

Before the
Vulgar Æra, 26. Self-Sacrifice. 29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming
Julian Period, unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of
4739. God, which taketh away the sin of the world !

Bethabara.

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me : for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not : but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

* Matt. iii. 16. 32 * And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not : but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

ANDREW. 'The dove came down to show
Emblem of Love and Innocence. John that Jesus was full of love.

MR. ALCOTT. What made the thoughts of dove and love come so near together in his mind ?

ANDREW. A dove is the emblem of love.' Jesus loved every body, and every thing, he never quarrelled, he was loving.

MR. ALCOTT. If you were painting a picture of this scene, should you put in the dove ?

ANDREW. No ; God made John imagine a dove. It was the love of Jesus in his thoughts, which his imagination shaped into a dove.

MR. ALCOTT. Suppose you had the thought of innocence in your mind, and you wanted other people to think of it with pleasure, how could you represent all you felt about it in one word of an emblematic character ?

ANDREW. I could think of a spring of fresh water.

ANOTHER. I should say a little lamb.

JOHN B. Jesus was called the Lamb of God because he was so innocent.

MR. ALCOTT. Where are all emblems
Spirit typified in Nature. found ?

ANDREW. In Nature.

MR. ALCOTT. What is Nature ?

CHARLES. An emblem of God.

MR. ALCOTT. And of the feelings of men, also.

SAMUEL T. I do not know what it means by its taking away the sins of the world.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you know how the Lamb of God could take away your naughtiness, Samuel ?

SAMUEL T. No, unless it means that if you imitate Jesus Christ, it will lead you away from wickedness.

MR. ALCOTT. Well, that is a good meaning. When you began to talk of the temptation the other day, you

were at first puzzled with the mountain, the pinnacle of the temple, &c.; but all was clear when you found they were emblems. Jesus Christ and his disciples talked a great deal in emblems. He used Nature to give meaning to the Soul.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you like little lambs ?

(*All held up hands.*)

ELLEN. They are perfect in shape.

FRANKLIN. They are emblems of innocence and humility.

ELLEN. Jesus was, really, all that a lamb is an emblem of.

MARTHA. The way a lamb teaches goodness is this ; its happiness shows that its innocence is right.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think, if there was a flock of lambs on the Common, frolicking, loving one another, never quarrelling, and that were you to see them every day, you should learn not to quarrel, but be made better by having them so near you ?

(*Several raised hands.*)

Would the lambs grow better by seeing and imitating you at play ?

EDWARD. A lamb does not know what wrong is.

ANDREW. A lamb is the emblem of mildness.

MR. ALCOTT. Have you seen a butcher with his knife going to kill a lamb ? It looks up to the butcher with a gentle, submissive, trusting look, and seems to say, what kind thing are you going to do to me, my good master ? I am sure I shall like whatever you do. And then it lies without a struggle, and lets him put his knife in. It is surprised, perhaps, at the pain, but it thinks some good is coming in the end ; it looks so very confiding and patient, as if it said, Well, I will bear it as well as I can, for I am

Idea and
Emblem of
Self-Sacrifice.

sure you must be going to do me good. What is the lamb, all this time, an emblem of ?

CHARLES. Submission.

ALEXANDER. Patience.

FRANKLIN. Forbearance.

FREDERIC. Trust.

EMMA. Self-Sacrifice.

MR. ALCOTT. And was not Jesus submissive, patient, forbearing, trustful, and self-sacrificing ? Did he not give up his body with resignation and a noble fortitude ? What other self-sacrifice is there, besides this of the body ?

CHARLES. The feelings.

MR. ALCOTT. Are we often obliged to sacrifice our feelings ?

SEVERAL. Yes, every day.

MR. ALCOTT. Have any of you sacrificed your dearest wishes to the good of others ?

(A few raised their hands.)

RECORDER. Did any of you ever make a sacrifice, which you were sure no human being but yourself could know ?

EMMA. Once.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think that you ever made a sacrifice purely for its own sake ?

JOSIAH. I do not think that I ever did. But, Mr. Alcott, why was Jesus called the lamb, rather than the dove ?

MR. ALCOTT. The Jews used lambs in sacrifice.

EMMA. And Jesus was going to do what the lambs represented in the worship.

MR. ALCOTT. What act takes away sin ?

Purification by Self-Sacrifice. CHARLES. Repentance.

MR. ALCOTT. The act I mean includes repentance, and also the reformation which flows from

repentance. John preached repentance, but Jesus preached something more.

FRANKLIN. Self-Sacrifice.

MR. ALCOTT. What did John mean by
Excellence. saying "he that cometh after me is preferred before me"?

EMMA. That he was better, more spiritual.

MR. ALCOTT. Why "preferred before" John?

SOME. God preferred him.

OTHERS. Men preferred him.

MR. ALCOTT. What does "for he was before me" mean?

CHARLES. He was before in spirit.

NATHAN. I thought before meant higher in spirit, better.

MARTHA. He was before in goodness, and knew a great deal more.

SAMUEL R. More holy.

FRANCES. Better.

GEORGE K. Better in the sight of God.

FRANKLIN. The spirit of Jesus did not come into a body so soon as John's; but I think they were born in the spiritual world together.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you know why John said "I knew him not"?

JOSIAH. He did not know that he was the Messiah. The word Christ means anointed¹, you know. Kings used to be anointed in those days. Christ's anointment was the goodness and spirit God gave him, so that he might rule over other spirits.

MR. ALCOTT. How could John's baptizing make him known to the Jews, "manifest him in Israel"?

GEORGE K. Because they could know by the dove.

MR. ALCOTT. How should you be able to know Christ, if he were to come now?

EMMA. By being good.

John's Mission. MR. ALCOTT. John's mission was to call to repentance and purification ; and this repentance and purification were necessary preparations for apprehending Christ. Goodness gives wisdom. You thought at our last conversation that there were some persons now, who preached the doctrine of John. Do you think there are any persons at the present time, who have an influence like Jesus Christ's, who baptize with the Holy Ghost ?

(Several held up hands.)

Do you suppose that this repentance and purification of John's time, was like repentance and purification now-a-days ?

(They all held up their hands.)

Spiritual Experience. Do you think these emblems could be applied to what passes within yourselves ; can it be said of you that the baptism of repentance has been in your soul, and the dove has descended upon it ?

(They hesitated.)

Can you say to yourself, I have repented of doing wrong ; I have turned away from my sins ; I have gone down into the deep waters of baptism and washed away my sins ; I have felt a spirit of holiness, gentleness, sweetness, come upon me, and seem to call me child, and tell me to hear and obey ?

EMMA. I have felt so, somewhat.

ELLEN. I never felt so sorry as I ought.

(Some of them signified that they had not experienced these thoughts.)

MR. ALCOTT. Those may rise who think they have seen persons who seemed to have gone through all this.

(All rose but three or four.)

MR. ALCOTT. John, having seen Jesus baptized and visited by the dove, said "And I saw and bare record that he was the Son of God."

Idea of Absolute
and Derived Be-
ing.

SEVERAL. He was God without the body.

MR. ALCOTT. Take away the body and would he be God ?

(Many rose.)

Do any of you think that if the body were taken away, still there would be some difference ?

LUCIA and JOSIAH. He had not quite so much power as God.

MR. ALCOTT. Do any of you think, that if your bodies were taken away, you should be God ?

(No answer.)

Do any of you think that if a baby's body was taken away, its soul would be God ?

EMMA. A part of God.

AUGUSTINE. We are all parts of God.

RECORDER. *(Aside.)* What are you pursuing with these questions ? you seem to wish them to come to the idea that purity of spirit is identity with God ?

MR. ALCOTT. I am ascertaining their views of the difference between the absolute and derived, of God in man, and the Idea of Absolute Being typified in Derivative. There is a sense in which God and man are One.

If all the good there ever was in men were put together, would it be God ?

FRANKLIN. It would be part of God.

MR. ALCOTT. In what sense was Jesus the Son of God ?

FRANKLIN. There was no bad in him.

(More questions ensued, and the idea of identity of being, between Jesus and God was expressed by the larger number, Lucia, George K., and Josiah pre-

served the idea of difference of identity, but moral union.)

MR. ALCOTT. In these conversations I
 Test of Opinions. have asked you many questions, in order
 to find your views about them. Have you formed any
 notion regarding my opinions of the subjects talked
 about, from the questions asked you? Do you know
 what I think? All may rise who do.

(All rose.)

Who think that I believe Jesus was at first like our-
 selves in all respects?

(Lucia, Josiah, and George K.)

Who think that I regard him as God in a body?

(All the rest except Charles.)

CHARLES. I cannot tell what you think ; you some-
 times talk on one side, and sometimes on the other.
 What do you think ?

MR. ALCOTT. I prefer not to reply to such questions,
 because I do not wish to influence your opinions by
 mine. I teach what every pure person believes. Re-
 flect upon these subjects, and come to your own con-
 clusions.

Synopsis of
 the preceding
 Conversations. You will remember that when we began
 these conversations, we said we were going
 to study Spirit. And first we talked about
 Spirit in God ; then, of Spirit in a new born Infant,
 brought by Angels, worshipped by Wise Men, taken
 care of by good Parents ; then we talked of Spirit in the
 Temple conversing, though yet in a Child, with Learned
 Men, and astonishing them ; then, of Spirit going to
 an humble Home and living in retirement obeying
 Parents and Laws ; then of Spirit baptized and called
 Son by God ; then of Spirit tempted and victorious ;

then, of Spirit recognised as the Lamb of God, and Teacher of Men ; and in our next conversation we shall speak of Spirit making Disciples. — Do you think these conversations are of any use to you?

CHARLES. Yes ; they teach us a great deal.

MR. ALCOTT. What do they teach you?

GEORGE K. To know ourselves.

MR. ALCOTT. And this is the most important knowledge. He who shall know himself shall know God, and his Fellow Men, and Nature, for all these are Imaged in his Soul. We have been studying a perfect Spirit manifesting itself in a Body like ours, and yet without sinning. The use of these conversations is to give us an Idea of this Perfect Man, this God in Flesh, and inspire us to strive to be like him.



Jesus conversing with the Doctors.

A P P E N D I X .

NOTES.

CONVERSATION I.

NOTE 1, PAGE 2.

(Here Mr. Alcott asked, *What does sincere conversation mean?*)

GEORGE K. When we are very still and interested.

LEMUEL. When we speak our thoughts and no one's else.

CHARLES. When we do not affect any thing, or talk for show.

FRANKLIN. When we are sober, (not making fun) and say what we really mean.

NOTE 2, PAGE 6.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you call those faculties or functions, which see, hear, touch, taste, and smell?

JOSIAH. The senses.

MR. ALCOTT. You may name the organs of sense.

LEMUEL. The tongue is the organ of taste.

FRANCIS. The eye is the organ of sight.

WILLIAM C. The hand is the organ of feeling.

LEMUEL. No; the nerves feel.

SUSAN. The hand is the organ of touch.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; I should like to have feeling kept for the spiritual act.

SEVERAL. The ear is the organ of hearing.

NOTE 3, PAGE 6.

MR. ALCOTT. What is an instrument?

SEVERAL. A knife, a spoon, the lungs, the ear, &c.

CHARLES. Jesus Christ was the instrument of God.

MR. ALCOTT. That is a spiritual application of the word.

NOTE 4, PAGE 6.

(Here Mr. Alcott asked for emblems of the senses.)

FRANKLIN. The leaves of a tree, for they breathe in the outward world, as the senses take it into our bodies.

MR. ALCOTT. What do the senses go out after?

GEORGE K. Outward things, and food, and air.

FRANKLIN. And after space.

(Other things were also mentioned.)

NOTE 5, PAGE 7.

MR. ALCOTT. Are the senses intended to keep the mind and body good?

FRANKLIN. The senses see wrong things which make us bad.

NOTE 6, PAGE 7.

MR. ALCOTT. Is there any conscience in shame?

ALL. Yes.

NOTE 7, PAGE 8.

(Mr. Alcott again asked, What is wisdom?)

LEMUEL. Wisdom is the spirit's knowledge.

MR. ALCOTT. What other knowledge is there?

LEMUEL. Worldly knowledge.

MR. ALCOTT. What is worldly knowledge?

ELLEN. Knowledge about the body.

CHARLES. About geography and material things.

MR. ALCOTT. What power of the spirit gathers knowledge?

LEMUEL. Reason and conscience get wisdom.

NOTE 8, PAGE 9.

MR. ALCOTT. What are the senses that do not go out, but inward?

LUCIA. Conscience is one.

MR. ALCOTT. There is a man to whom I owe some money, perhaps, I must pay him.

FRANKLIN. Honesty is an inward sense.

MR. ALCOTT. Sense of Justice, and the sense of Duty, of Right. And here is a man very sick and unhappy.

MARTHA. Compassion is one of the inward senses.

NOTE 9, PAGE 9.

MR. ALCOTT. Let us speak of the senses more particularly. What is the Taster?

JOSIAH. The spirit.

NATHAN. The senses.

CHARLES and SAMUEL R. The tongue.

ELLEN. I once thought it was the tongue, but I think now it is the spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. A dead tongue surely could not taste.

THE REST. The spirit is the taster.

MR. ALCOTT. Now tell me the name of the Looker?

SOME. Conscience.

THE REST. Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. I am asking about the out-looker not the in-looker. But what is the name of the Seer?

MANY. This is only another name for looker.

(There was here a pause.)

FRANKLIN. God is the Seer.

THE REST. No; conscience or spirit sees.

GEORGE K. The eye is the looker and conscience is the seer.

JOSIAH. No; The soul is the looker, and the spirit the seer.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the Listener?

SEVERAL. Spirit.

GEORGE B. Conscience.

MARTHA. The soul.

FRANKLIN. Jesus Christ.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you mean by that, Franklin?

FRANKLIN. I mean the same as the spirit, when I say Jesus Christ.

JOSIAH. Mind is the listener.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you mean different things, Josiah, by mind, soul, and spirit, or the same thing, acting in different ways?

JOSIAH. I think it is the soul that acts upon the senses, while the spirit is acting inwardly; and the mind has something to do with the senses too; the mind does all about hearing, and the soul all about seeing.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the name of the Knower?

JOSIAH. The heart.

CHARLES. God.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you mean by that?

CHARLES. Why God and the spirit are one, and when the spirit is so perfect as to know every thing, it is God.

LEMUEL. Reason is the knower.

WILLIAM C. Mind.

(Others agreed.)

FRANKLIN. Jesus Christ is the knower.

LUCIA. The understanding knows.

JOSIAH. It takes the spirit and every thing that is in it, to know, (the reason, the understanding, and all the faculties.) The spirit sees that all these go on rightly.

GEORGE K. Conscience knows.

GEORGE B. The soul is the knower.

MR. ALCOTT. When you use these various words, I want to know whether you mean different things, different powers, or different ways in which the one power of spirit acts.

FRANKLIN. I mean spirit when I say Jesus Christ, for I am tired of saying spirit. But I mean the same thing.

MR. ALCOTT. Have any of you said some word, because you were tired of saying the word which was the simplest and truest?

(None assented.)

How many mean something acting differently when they say heart, conscience, &c., from what they mean when they say spirit?

(All raised hands.)

What is the name of the Feeler (not the Toucher)?

SEVERAL. The spirit.

CHARLES. The heart is the spirit that feels.

JOSIAH. Mr. Alcott, I think a little of the mind and a little of the soul go down and form a body, and that body feels.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the name of the Believer?

SEVERAL. The spirit,

OTHERS. Conscience.

OTHERS. The heart believes.

MR. ALCOTT. When you use these words, do you mean different powers separate from spirit?

SEVERAL. Not separated.

CHARLES. But different powers.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the Actor, Willer, the *I*?

SEVERAL. The spirit.

(All agreed.)

MR. ALCOTT. What is the Obeyer?

SEVERAL. Spirit.

CHARLES. The body is the obeyer of the spirit.

ELLEN. No; the body is the instrument, by which the spirit obeys.

OTHERS. Conscience obeys.

CHARLES. I meant what Ellen said.

MR. ALCOTT. What, or where is the Chooser?

SOME. Conscience chooses.

OTHERS. Spirit is the Chooser.

MR. ALCOTT. Did you ever hear of persons placed in the midst of beautiful things, in a beautiful place, charming to their senses, where they could gather food for the spirit also; with nothing but kindness around them, to protect them from pain and sorrow, and to teach them not to indulge too much in eating and drinking, and yet who chose to disobey?

CHARLES. Yes; it was in the Garden of Eden.

FRANKLIN. I have done it myself.

GEORGE K. I was in that garden when I was a baby.

SEVERAL. So was I.

MR. ALCOTT. When did you first taste the forbidden fruit?

WILLIAM C. When I began to do wrong.

MR. ALCOTT. What did wrong?

WILLIAM C. My body.

LUCIA. My appetites and passions.

MR. ALCOTT. Where did the evil begin ?

LUCIA. In my Will.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the tree of knowledge ?

FRANKLIN. Indulgence.

GEORGE K. Temptation.

MR. ALCOTT. The outward world, perhaps ; and what is the tree of life ?

FRANKLIN. The spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Why have I asked you these questions about the Taster, Looker, Knower, Feeler, Believer, Seer, Listener, Actor, Willer, Obeyer, and Chooser ?

CHARLES. To show us that the beginning of all action and all movement is within us.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes ; I have been endeavouring to lift your vision above the organs, the senses, the understanding, the reason, into Spirit, the origin and cause of all your actions.

NOTE 10, PAGE 10.

(All these answers, in their connexion, will show how quickly the children apply their new generalizations. But it is impossible for a mere reader of this record to have any idea of the reality of these conversations, as they appear to those who are sufficiently familiar with the children, to see the characteristics of their minds, in their associations. Manner has a great influence upon the force of words ; especially the manner of children, whose very artificialness, when it does exist, is so thin, that it reveals the laws of the individual mind.)

CONVERSATION II.

NOTE 11, PAGE 17.

GEORGE K. I think I was very silly, when I said that it was truer that the stove was in the room, than that the Gospels were true.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you feel equally sure of the truth of the Gospels now?

GEORGE K. Yes.

NOTE 12, PAGE 17.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you feel, Charles, that you are now free from your doubt about these words of Luke, and the other Gospel writers?

CHARLES. Yes; you know I got over the doubt then, on account of what was said, of the care that was taken of the old manuscripts.

(Mr. Alcott enlarged still more upon this head. He then spoke of the several Gospels; and remarked that sometimes all the gospel writers described the same event, and that there were slight differences in the manner in which things were described, which arose from the different minds of the different writers, which made them attend to different parts of the things described. He illustrated it, by supposing something to occur on the Common, and they were all to see it, and to describe it, when each would describe it according to his own way of looking at it. He went on to speak of Matthew's account of the conversations of Jesus. Matthew and Mark were quite minute in their accounts of circumstances. John seemed to remember the very words of Jesus, for in his accounts was preserved the picturesque manner in which Jesus bodied

*forth his ideas. He wrote his Gospel long after the others had finished theirs, and it is supposed that he wrote it chiefly to complete the account, and so he omitted a great deal that the others had told. Matthew and Luke related all those beautiful circumstances attendant on the nati-
ties.)*

NOTE 13, PAGE 17.

MR. ALCOTT. As many of you as think you have as high evidence, that these words of the written Gospels are a true record of what Jesus Christ did, as you have of any thing that is put into language, may rise.

(All rose.)

As many as think they have as high evidence that Jesus Christ lived, as that they live themselves, may rise.

(All rose.)

How do you know that this Record of Jesus Christ's action is true?

CHARLES. Because the principles and truths of the Gospel are acted out every day; and when we do the same kind of things Jesus did, we have proofs within ourselves that it is as Jesus said. I feel perfectly sure that Jesus lived and did just as it says there.

SEVERAL. So do I.

SUSAN. I am sure of it, because Luke would not say so, if it was not true. There are a great many things that are said there, which we know are true, because we find them out in ourselves.

MR. ALCOTT. You mean by experience?

SUSAN. Yes; and so we believe that all the rest of the things said there are true.

CHARLES. And we see there is nothing there, that does not happen every day, and so there is no reason why we should not believe.

MR. ALCOTT. Is Lazarus raised, and are demons cast out every day?

CHARLES. There is resurrection, as we know in other ways, every day, and men are possessed by appetites and passions; and their demons are cast out by faith, and love, and truth

MR. ALCOTT. There are many men among us, Charles, who do not feel this evidence that you speak of. Yes; some ministers, I fear, go into the pulpit and preach, who do not.

CHARLES. Then they have not risen from their graves — the graves of their bodies.

MR. ALCOTT. Which set of senses do they set up to judge truth, their external or internal senses?

CHARLES. Their external senses.

MR. ALCOTT. Can we always trust our external senses?

CHARLES. No; never.

MR. ALCOTT. Not even when we are perfectly good, or, if we were perfectly good?

CHARLES. Yes; if we were perfectly good, and had never done wrong, nor inherited any disease, to spoil our temper, I suppose we could.

MR. ALCOTT. As many as are perfectly convinced, and cannot doubt, that there is a Spirit within you, may rise.

(All rose up.)

Yesterday I saw a man who said he knew of no evidence of spirit.

ELLEN. How large a man?

MR. ALCOTT. A grown up man, and learned.

CHARLES. Why did you not talk to him and tell him?

MR. ALCOTT. Faith and knowledge of spirit is something which cannot come by the hearing of the ear; it comes by living, by a pure and holy life. If any man will have faith, he must first be pure, both in body and mind.

CONVERSATION III.

NOTE 14, PAGE 18.

(Mr. Alcott asked if it was important to be spiritually minded, in order to understand the spiritual. Several held up hands. He explained it, by expressing the idea that previous likeness was necessary for communication. He then asked them to think of those in school who did not understand spiritual things, as well as others; and to tell him, without mentioning their names, why it was so.)

LUCIA. Because they have not cultivated their spirits.

SAMUEL R. And have not thought enough; or have thought too much of their bodies.

CHARLES. They do not try to find out about Jesus Christ.

MR. ALCOTT. What faculty are they mastered by?

SEVERAL. Their appetites.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did John understand?

NATHAN. Because he was so good.

MR. ALCOTT. How came John to go into principles most? was it because he was more spiritual?

(They assented.)

NOTE 15, PAGE 18.

MR. ALCOTT. Give me the history of a word — who is a wordmaker?

CHARLES. God.

MR. ALCOTT. How do words first come to you?

SEVERAL. By hearing. By thought.

MR. ALCOTT. What are words?

LEMUEL. Thoughts expressed.

MR. ALCOTT. What word is large enough to spread over all that is in Conscience, and that opens out all in the Outward World?

JOSIAH. Creation.

MR. ALCOTT. Creation is made known to us through it. It is the light that comes forth from God, &c. It is Revelation.

SEVERAL. I never heard that word.

MR. ALCOTT. God reveals himself in Reason; in Imagination; in the Outward World; in the Bible; in Moses; in David; in the Prophets; in the trees; in the flowers; in oceans, &c.

Does God reveal him self in you?

MANY. Some.

NATHAN. A very little.

JOSIAH. God does not reveal himself in me, but only in Jesus Christ.

NATHAN. We should not live if God did not act through us.

(Mr. Alcott then recurred to the reading, and said,)

What is the darkness that does not comprehend the light?

LEMUEL. Intemperance.

SEVERAL. The appetites.

NATHAN. Laziness.

CHARLES. Ignorance.

NOTE 16, PAGE 19.

MR. ALCOTT. Charles, do you think now as you thought then?

CHARLES. I think as I did then; but I don't think my answer explained the passage; I think the words of the Bible are the best words.

MR. ALCOTT. I wish you would all of you give me an emblem of Creation.

HERBERT. A little child beginning to speak.

MARTHA. A little child.

SAMUEL R. A bud beginning to open.

GEORGE B. A plant coming out of the ground.

ELLEN. A little child beginning to exist.

(Mr. Alcott spoke of Incarnation generally.)

NOTE 17, PAGE 20.

MR. ALCOTT. Has an answer to that question come yet?

LUCIA. Yes; it came when we talked of the origin of Good and Evil in one of the conversations.

NOTE 18, PAGE 21.

MR. ALCOTT. How is Conscience a word of God?

NATHAN and CHARLES. Because it tells right and wrong.

MR. ALCOTT. How is Nature a word of God?

JOSIAH. Because it shows forth God's works, and how they are made, to our eyes.

MR. ALCOTT. When God's word comes through Conscience, what faculties does it address?

JOSIAH. Why, even then, sometimes, it addresses the eye; for when I walk out, and every thing is very beautiful, and I have been doing something wrong, I think I feel it.

MR. ALCOTT. And what when you are doing right?

JOSIAH. Why, then every thing seems pleasant.

MR. ALCOTT. Who is the most perfect emblem of God?

ALL. Jesus Christ.

MR. ALCOTT. What other person?

GEORGE. Socrates.

MARTHA. Mary, the mother of Jesus.

FRANCIS. I think you are a little like Jesus Christ.

NOTE 19, PAGE 21.

MR. ALCOTT. Such of you as think that Jesus had something within him which you have not in you, may rise.

(Ellen and Corinna rose.)

Do the rest think that you have all the faculties that he had?

(They assented.)

NATHAN. We have conscience as much as he.

MR. ALCOTT. Is it because you have not cultivated what is within you faithfully, that you are not like Jesus Christ?

(All but Ellen assented.)

Why, then, have you not done as much, and why are you not as spiritual as Jesus, when he was twelve years old?

JOSIAH. Because I have not used my powers so much.

MARTHA. Because I have indulged my passions and spoiled my powers.

CHARLES. Because I have not attended to cultivating my powers as I ought.

LEMUEL. Because I have indulged myself.

SAMUEL R. I have done wrong, and have not brought out my powers.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you think you have God within you to be brought out?

(Several thought they had.)

MR. ALCOTT. Was all of God brought out in Jesus Christ?

GEORGE. Not all.

CHARLES. He had not a chance to show it all.

ELLEN. I think Jesus was equal with God.

MR. ALCOTT. Were there two equals?

ELLEN. No; there was only one.

SAMUEL R. I think Jesus was God, but not all of God; God is everywhere else besides; wherever there is goodness.

MR. ALCOTT. Does it seem to lessen Jesus to say that you have every faculty which he has?

CHARLES. Yes; I think it does.

NOTE 20, PAGE 25.

GEORGE K. I think the same now, but not on the same account.

CHARLES. I don't think that it is any proof of perfection to make decaying things.

NOTE 21, PAGE 26.

GEORGE. I thought then that it would be necessary to have learnt in an outward way about all outward things.

MR. ALCOTT. Where is the perfection of the outward world?

CHARLES. In the inward world, where the Idea must be perfected.

MR. ALCOTT. Such as think it requires more power to keep a spirit pure than to make an outward world, may hold up hands.

CHARLES. No; because you cannot make an outward world without being pure first.

MR. ALCOTT. Which has the most perfection in it, an outward world, or a perfect soul?

GEORGE. A perfect soul.

MR. ALCOTT. Have you any thing to say about the cure of that withered arm? I should tell you here that it was quite inadvertent for me to speak of making bones and muscles, for they are not annihilated in a withered arm.

CHARLES. I think the bones and muscles were there, but the connexion had been cut off, and his soul did not work there. But when faith came, his soul was enlivened and ran down into his arm and used it.

MARTHA. It was the union of Jesus' spirit and the man's spirit that cured the arm.

NOTE 22, PAGE 27.

MR. ALCOTT. What has been the subject to-day?

GEORGE B. Revelation.

MR. ALCOTT. Almost all have expressed that they think, God is revealed in every thing; in Jesus Christ, in Good Men, in the Outward World, even in Yourselves; and that the only reason why we are not all like Jesus Christ is because we do not use every thing that we have within us; excepting Ellen. — Now let me ask you a new question. Do you think the opinions you have expressed are those which grown up people generally have?

CHARLES. I do not know what other people's opinions are, but I should think they were like mine.

MR. ALCOTT. How many think your opinions are your own, and not derived from others?

(All rose.)

ELLEN. My parents may influence me some.

MR. ALCOTT. Who else think their parents have influenced them?

CHARLES. I have not the least idea what my parents think, any more than what you think?

(Here some conversation ensued as to what Mr. Alcott thought, and all expressed their ignorance as to what he thought of the various subject son which themselves differed. Some wished he would tell them; some not, lest it should influence their opinions.)

CONVERSATION IV.

NOTE 23, PAGE 29.

CHARLES. I think John came not only to announce Jesus, but to do good himself, and help him.

ANDREW and MARTHA. He came to prepare for him.

NOTE 24, PAGE 29.

GEORGE K. I think that all men were inferior to Jesus.

CHARLES. What was John's mission?

MR. ALCOTT. Farther on, we concluded that John's mission was one of Temperance. He spoke of repentance, of purification from sin, of remedy for past evil. His object was to restore people to their innocence, — to subdue the appetites and passions of those who had grown up in evil doing, and prepare themselves for living on those spiritual principles, which are wrapt up in the Infant Soul, and which Jesus acted out. John's mission must always precede that of Jesus, in those who have grown up without Jesus. — Before persons given up to their appetites can receive and understand spiritual things, they must repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, else they cannot perceive that there is a kingdom of God, into which they can enter.

NOTE 25, PAGE 30.

GEORGE. I do not think so.

MARTHA. I think the star was an emblem of the light of Jesus.

ANDREW. I don't think so now.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you know what your idea was?

ANDREW. I thought one of the stars shone more brightly, on purpose to be a sign that Jesus had come.

CHARLES. I think that was always the brightest star, and when Jesus came, all the stars brightened. You know, that it was dark when Jesus was crucified. He had made it so bright while he was in the world, that when his spirit left the world, it seemed dark for a while by contrast.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think the external world sympathized with his advent and his departure?

CHARLES. Yes; Nature sympathized.

NOTE 26, PAGE 30.

(When he came to this question, he asked it again.)

SOME. Yes.

CHARLES. I like to have Jesus alone have a star.

EMMA. I think it might be so for all.

CHARLES. The spirit of a baby is a star.

MR. ALCOTT. When the spirit first came into your body, was it star-like, and did it stand over the place where the body lay?

CHARLES. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Did any Wise Ones worship there?

CHARLES. Only our father and mother.

NOTE 27, PAGE 30.

(When Josiah's remark was read that John was the shadow of Jesus, it was observed that this thought might have been suggested to him by the verse, "He was not that light, but he came to bear witness of that light.")

MR. ALCOTT. What is the "Light that lighteth every man," &c.?

GEORGE K. The Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Give some manifestations of that light.

GEORGE K. Love, gratitude, faith, hope.

MARTHA. The Bible.

LEMUEL. Repentance enlightens.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; after we have become dark, but what enlightens at first?

EMMA. Conscience.

CHARLES. Reason, Imagination.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; Reason is light, and love is warmth. When we speak of that faculty which sends forth light, what do we call it?

EMMA. The understanding.

CHARLES. Reason.

MR. ALCOTT. But whence comes the warmth?

CHARLES. From the heart. And warmth is more valuable than light. I should rather have it.

MR. ALCOTT. Who have more light than warmth; think more than they feel?

(*None.*)

He reversed the question.

(*All rose.*)

NOTE 28, PAGE 30.

(*When Mr. Alcott came to Lucia's remark, he asked what Moses appealed to, the head, or heart.*)

CHARLES. The head.

NOTE 29, PAGE 30.

(*When Mr. Alcott read the expression of Nathan, "sent down from heaven,"*)

CHARLES and LEMUEL. The expression is too external.

GEORGE and MARTHA. Once I had that outward view only, but I am just taking the inward view.

ANDREW. It is impossible for me to help having this image.

MOST. The first thought is the outward, the sky, &c.; but it is corrected by the next thought.

SEVERAL. We like the image, and do not like to give it up.

CHARLES. It is a perfect emblem.

MR. ALCOTT. Did you come from heaven just as John did?

(*Several.*)

NATHAN. I think the word *down* had better be left out of my answer.

MR. ALCOTT. Where is heaven?

FRANCIS. In our spirits.

HILLMAN. Every where.

ANDREW. Wherever there is goodness, not in body, but in spirit.

GEORGE. Wherever there is love and gratitude.

CHARLES. Wherever there is Perfection.

MR. ALCOTT. And where there is striving for Perfection. There is most in Conscience.

EMMA. Every where, but most in spirit.

LEMUEL. Wherever there is goodness.

MARTHA and GEORGE B. In our thoughts.

(Nathan and Corinna agreed with Emma.)

MR. ALCOTT. Why has the sky become the emblem of heaven?

MARTHA. Because it is above, and God is above.

CHARLES. Because it is beautiful and full of stars.

GEORGE. Because we feel that God, who is above us, is more pure and beautiful than we are, and so is the sky.

CHARLES. And you cannot see the end of it, that is, it is infinite.

EMMA. And it is over and around every thing.

WILLIAM C. We think God is better, and ought to be above us.

GEORGE B. I know that heaven is within, but I imagine it in the sky.

CHARLES. I once thought it was in the sky, and was happy in my ignorance, for I was not perplexed.

MR. ALCOTT. Do any of you feel that were the sky and earth to pass away, heaven would remain, so sure are you that it is in the Spirit, and that the outward heavens are but the emblem of it?

(Most of them rose.)

NOTE 30, PAGE 31.

(When Mr. Alcott came to the subject of angels, introduced by George K., he asked their present thoughts.)

MARTHA. I think some angels have had bodies and some not.

GEORGE K. I think angels were good people that have lived here.

EMMA. Angels are God's messengers, like our thoughts ; they bring us our thoughts.

MR. ALCOTT. So you think that they are not ourselves, but bring us thoughts. Is there any thing human in them? can you become angels? have you been angels?

(Almost all rose.)

GEORGE. My spirit was an angel when I was a baby.

MR. ALCOTT. What change happens to an angel when it takes a body?

CHARLES. It becomes human.

NOTE 31, PAGE 31.

(On Edward B.'s remark that evil spirits were the devil's angels,)

MARTHA. Bad spirits ought not to be called angels.

LEMUEL. They ought to be called demons.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think that you were angels before you were boys and girls?

(Many.)

Do you think that you shall be angels when you die?

(Many.)

Some people live only in the body. They are body folks. Some feel that they have lived before they were in the body, and are sure that they shall live after they leave the body.

CHARLES. I think that Jesus Christ was Adam, and that Adam was an angel first.

FRANCIS. It says in the Bible that Adam was the Son of God.

NOTE 32, PAGE 31.

(At Edward B.'s remark on the remembrance of our angelic life, Charles said, "I like that," and all but Andrew assented.)

MR. ALCOTT. Can you remember any instances of Jesus referring to his angelic life?

CHARLES. No; but I like the idea very much, and it is a new one to me; I never had it before.*

MR. ALCOTT. Who else are pleased with this idea?

(All rose, and Mr. Alcott asked them to reproduce the idea, and they did in so many words. Mr. Alcott remarked that Plato thought so, and added that Plato taught how we were born into this world, and Jesus how we were to be born out of the body.)

CHARLES. Did Plato live before Jesus?

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; a great while.

CHARLES. How could he know then about Spirit? I should have thought that he would have been a prophet, or an apostle.

MR. ALCOTT. And was he not? Christians who seek depth to their knowledge read Plato, and learn from him as well as from the Bible, the nature of Spirit. Before Jesus came, Plato revealed spiritual things; and all spiritually minded people loved him. I do not know that Jesus ever read his works, but he might have done so. He seldom speaks of the books which he had read; he seldom quoted books.

CHARLES. Oh, I wish he had; we might then have known what to read ourselves.

MR. ALCOTT. I do not mean that all who entertain the sentiments of Christianity read Plato, but people who would understand the Idea that Christianity gives of Spirit, find that Plato sheds light upon it.

EMMA. Some people who believe that the Spirit is to live after the body dies, do not believe that it lived before the body was born.

MR. ALCOTT. Yet they may not understand, fully, what they feel or believe?

EMMA. They only think they do, perhaps.

CHARLES. How came they, in those times, to believe in Moses?

MR. ALCOTT. They had been taught to believe in him; but they did not understand even Moses, or they would have believed

* Those who think Mr. Alcott systematically teaches *pre-existence*, should mark this answer of a boy who has been his scholar longer than any other and lives in his house. — REC.

Jesus. Moses did not address the heart. He addressed the head, and the heart may, but does not always, follow that.

NOTE 33, PAGE 32.

(When Mr. Alcott came to the place where prophecy was spoken of, they expressed interest to know what they had thought so long ago on that subject. On reading it, Charles remarked that the last conversation on prophecy was more perfect, though he had said nothing better on that subject than he did the first time.)

NOTE 34, PAGE 32.

(On the next question, Mr. Alcott said the prophet looked both within and without. He asked whether he did not look in for the Idea, and outward for the means of expressing it. He then spoke of the moral conditions of prophecy.)

MR. ALCOTT. He that understands a seed can see the tree in it. A little baby opens out into a man or woman. Thought and Love seem to be the seeds of all things.

NOTE 35, PAGE 32.

(At the remark that the Universal Prophet was God,)

MR. ALCOTT. How long does God prophecy an event, before it happens?

LEMUEL. He always knows.

MR. ALCOTT. Is there more foresight than hindsight, or is it insight, spreading over all time and space?

CHARLES. Either eternity has an end, or God's sight is within eternity.

MR. ALCOTT. A little child once said that "Eternity was God's life time."

CHARLES. Oh that is beautiful; it is a precious gem to be put by the side of Edward B.'s thought upon the remembrances of our angelic life.

EMMA. Charles said that eternity must have an end; but if it did, it would not be eternity.

MR. ALCOTT. Eternity is the abolition of all Time. No dial plate can measure it.

EMMA. A dial plate marks off Time

MR. ALCOTT. The flow of Eternity shall not cease, though centuries are marked off endlessly.

LEMUEL. Eternity has no hours, no spaces.

GEORGE K. I cannot imagine it.

MARTHA. I cannot imagine any thing without an end.

LEMUEL. There is no thing without an end.

CHARLES. My mind is too small to imagine any thing without an end.

MR. ALCOTT. No; your mind is so large that no finite thing can seem to you infinite. The reason you cannot imagine any thing without an end is, because your thought is larger than any thing, and more comprehensive. Every thing is finite, thought is infinite, and you feel this; no thing can measure this feeling.

NOTE 36, PAGE 33.

(When he came to Martha's thought, "it is impossible to have Prophets now,")

MARTHA. I don't think so now; I think now there can be.

NOTE 37, PAGE 33.

GEORGE K. I have changed my opinion about there being necessity of Prophets.

MR. ALCOTT. If we were Prophets, what law should we obey?

CHARLES. The law of Conscience.

MR. ALCOTT. And does not this law have to do with all your faculties, and all the organs of the body?

(They all agreed.)

NOTE 38, PAGE 34.

(When Mr. Alcott came to this answer, he asked, Has God a body?)

SEVERAL. No.

CHARLES. He has a great many bodies.

LEMUEL. He owns all bodies.

CHARLES. I think Jesus Christ's body might be said to be God's, for he was God.

MR. ALCOTT. Does God like any particular body?

LEMUEL. He likes man's best.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you say to this,—The Universe is the body of God; God has the Universe on him as we have our bodies on us; His Spirit supports, feeds, renovates it.

CHARLES. I thought of that, but I did not like it, and so I did not say it.

NOTE 39, PAGE 34.

MR. ALCOTT. There are some people who think that nothing is to be believed but what is evident to the senses.

CHARLES. Why, that is just the same thing as denying that there is a God.

NOTE 40, PAGE 35.

(At the passage on "will of the flesh," Mr. Alcott asked, What is meant by Will?)

CHARLES. The action of your desire.

GEORGE B. Resolution.

ANDREW. Determination.

MR. ALCOTT. It is Spirit acting.

NOTE 41, PAGE 35.

(Here it may be perceived the chain of thought was broken, and in the review of it Mr. Alcott omitted the answer of Lucia.)

MR. ALCOTT. What, is the will of man distinguished here from the will of God?

(No answer.)

When you do wrong, is your will the will of God?

(None thought so.)

What is the bad will of man?

(No answer for a great while.)

FRANCIS. Ugliness, wickedness.

LEMUEL. Obstinacy.

MR. ALCOTT. There is obstinacy in it.

CHARLES. Passion.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; the will of the flesh, discriminated from God's will, may be called Appetite; and the will of man may be called Passion.

NOTE 42, PAGE 35.

(*Mr. Alcott repeated the question "how was the Word made Flesh"?*)

EMMA. Spirit took a body.

MR. ALCOTT. When was the Word made Flesh in you?

CHARLES. About eleven years ago.

LEMUEL. About nine years ago in me.

NOTE 43, PAGE 36.

(*On the expression, "only begotten."*)

FRANCIS. That means the best.

CHARLES. It was conscience, but our conscience is not the only one.

MR. ALCOTT. Only God can beget conscience, so conscience is called the only begotten of God; and here it speaks of the Word's dwelling among men. Does the Word dwell among you?

CHARLES. Yes; our spirits are the Word.

CONVERSATION V.

NOTE 44, PAGE 38.

MR. ALCOTT. I did not correct William's expression, though it is not well to say Spirit has parts; but his thought was just. It is not agreeable to think of splitting God into parts. If it is agreeable to any of you, you may hold up hands.

CHARLES. You often ask us if we think our spirits are God, and we say we are parts of God.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; but it is not pleasant to think of God in parts. I should rather speak of God as a whole, and ourselves as attributes of God — I mean the spirit of man.

NOTE 45, PAGE 38.

GEORGE K. Truth and Love are not parts; they are in Spirit; they are Spirit.

CHARLES. They are not Spirit; they are Truth and Love.

MR. ALCOTT. There is a word which I have not told you, attributes, qualities.

CHARLES. I was going to say qualities, but I thought it was wrong.

MR. ALCOTT. You might also use the word features, — features of spirit.

NOTE 46, PAGE 38.

MR. ALCOTT. What has been the subject of these first four conversations? for you know that it was not till yesterday that we got to a man. There was something of preparation.

CHARLES. They were so long ago I do not remember them very vividly, even though you have reviewed them. They were to prepare the way to come to Jesus.

GEORGE K. Three were to prepare, but not that one about John.

MR. ALCOTT. In these four conversations we have spoken of the Ground, Foundation, Idea, and Evidences of Spirit — of the External and Internal Evidences of Spirit — of the Prophets — the Word — Revelation, Witness, and the Gospel Record.

NOTE 47, PAGE 40.

MR. ALCOTT. To-day we review how John's spirit took a body.

GEORGE K. I think Zacharias fell into deep thought, very deep, and an angel came into his thoughts.

CHARLES. He fell into a dream of delight; such as the child did in the "Story without an End," when he saw the image of his unknown parents float before him in mystery.

MR. ALCOTT. What kind of delight did he feel?

CHARLES. Parental delight. I wonder whether Elizabeth knew that she was to have a child.

MR. ALCOTT. Both Zacharias and Elizabeth had prayed to have a child; Elizabeth believed, but Zacharias thought of outward things.

NOTE 48, PAGE 40.

CHARLES. The angels made him dumb because he wanted faith.

GEORGE K. I think his punishment was too great.

MR. ALCOTT. Your sense of justice is violated.

NOTE 49, PAGE 40.

GEORGE K. Zacharias went into very deep thought, and then this thought of an angel came, but he did not know that the thought was real till he was made dumb.

CHARLES. Mr. Alcott, I think in my mind of incense going up on the altar, and Zacharias looking on it, and being in very deep thought; and he thinks how very glad he should be to have a little baby, who could be christened there, and he thinks till he feels as if he should, and his feeling is so beautiful and strong that it takes the shape of an angel.

NOTE 50, PAGE 41.

MR. ALCOTT. Franklin may tell me what he means by reality; did Zacharias see reality in his thoughts?

FRANKLIN. I mean the dream came to pass.

CHARLES. All good and holy dreams are real.

MR. ALCOTT. What makes the holy dream? Should you say a bad man could have holy dreams?

CHARLES. A bad man could not have good dreams, for we have often heard that Conscience tormented the bad in their dreams. But these were real dreams, because there is Conscience in them.

MR. ALCOTT. Have any of you had that come to you in dreams which afterwards took place in your life?

(Most held up hands. Others responded to the reverse.)

CHARLES. When I have done something wrong, I have dreamed of punishment, and the punishment came when I was awake.

MR. ALCOTT. Have any of you felt that the dream itself was a punishment, that the foresight of conscience is the retribution of conscience, that the dream punished you?

(Some held up hands.)

I see most of you think so.

CHARLES. Sometimes I have cried out loud, and thought it was real, even while it was a dream.

MR. ALCOTT. I am not aware of any nation on earth which does not believe in dreams—believe that they are prophetic. There are persons who do not, but I never knew of any nation.

CHARLES. There are dreams about outward things.

MR. ALCOTT. There are fancy dreams; but we are not talking of the dreams of superstition.

FRANKLIN. There are some people now who believe in holy dreams.

CHARLES. I do not think that there are such good dreams as there used to be in old times, because men were better then.

MR. ALCOTT. Do any of you think that you are good enough to interpret your own dreams?

(None answered.)

Do any believe there are dreams in which Conscience seems to foretell happiness or punishment?

(Some held up hands.)

Sometimes you expect to go somewhere or see some one, and in your dream you are there and see your friend and have the most delightful time.

FRANKLIN. Sometimes I get up in my sleep.

CHARLES. Sometimes I hug people in my dream. I did when I came to New York.

SAMUEL R. I dreamed just before Vacation, that I was already at home, and was very much disappointed when I awoke.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes, your heart was singing all the time, "father, mother, brothers, sisters;" and when you went to sleep, your heart's song continued, it still went on, "father, mother, brothers, sisters."

EMMA. I thought last night that mother had got home.

GEORGE K. I dreamed of a visit that I was going to make, that I was there, but when I awoke I found it rained, and I could not go.

NATHAN. I never had any Conscience dreams.

MR. ALCOTT. And I am sorry for it.

CHARLES. It is one way in which my mother punishes me, to talk to me of what I have done that is wrong before I go to sleep, so that my dreams may punish me.

MR. ALCOTT. Dreams are retrospective and prospective. Our thoughts doubtless go on in our sleep. The Soul is ever active.

NOTE 51, PAGE 41.

MR. ALCOTT. Have you any such difficulty as Edward had?

CHARLES. No; for he said he was Gabriel.

MR. ALCOTT. But you know evil spirits can tell a lie.

NATHAN. Evil spirits know nothing about God.

FRANKLIN. They don't like to speak of him.

MR. ALCOTT. They are pretty good at language.

NATHAN. Evil spirits could not make little babies come.

CHARLES. No; for babies are all good.

NOTE 52, PAGE 41.

CHARLES. God always does what is right; but we are not always able to understand it.

MR. ALCOTT. Zacharias' doubts perhaps closed his mouth; so he was not fit to speak.

CHARLES. Yes; but God made him dumb.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you all see it now?

CHARLES. I don't understand it, but I believe it, for my understanding brings up nothing against it.

MR. ALCOTT. Much that appertains to birth, it is impossible to understand, therefore all are dumb upon this subject.

CHARLES. Zacharias could not speak at all.

MR. ALCOTT. He certainly could not speak on that subject.

NOTE 53, PAGE 42.

MR. ALCOTT. Is that prayer?

EMMA. You should thank him besides.

MR. ALCOTT. Prayer is the soul, doing what?

EMMA. Communing with God.

MR. ALCOTT. Suppose that in the middle of this room was an altar of marble, and on the altar stood a censer, and in that censer was fire and sweet wood burning, and the sweet incense rose up and went through the temple.

GEORGE. The incense is an emblem —

MR. ALCOTT. — Of the aspiration of the soul in prayer. I should like to have that emblem here; it would be very beautiful.

NOTE 54, PAGE 42.

(Here Mr. Alcott repeated the question. All rose but Nathan and W. Augustus.)

NOTE 55, PAGE 42.

MR. ALCOTT. Where did that beautiful group of Greenough's first exist?

GEORGE K. In his thought.

NOTE 56, PAGE 43.

MR. ALCOTT. Andrew, have you seen angels since that time? Did not you rise just now?

ANDREW. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Well, I am glad that you have made progress.

CHARLES. Those angels of Greenough's were the most beautiful I ever saw.

MR. ALCOTT. Now I should like to know where the men who make all these beautiful angels first find them. An artist says, Now I will shape a beautiful angel — how must it look? — it never was seen. Then he shapes it in his thought; his hands go to work, his thoughts still lingering about it. At last it comes out in the marble. It is very beautiful. It never was seen before.

GEORGE K. It came from his thought.

MR. ALCOTT. The marble statues were not in his thought. Which was in his thought, the marble-angel or the thought-angel?

CHARLES. The thought-angel.

NOTE 57, PAGE 43.

MR. ALCOTT. Do such miracles happen now?

(Several held up hands.)

MR. ALCOTT. You may tell what was the miracle in that instance.

CHARLES. That Zacharias thought so much about the little baby that it came when he was old.

NOTE 58, PAGE 43.

(Here Mr. Alcott asked the question again, and again they differed in opinion.)

NOTE 59, PAGE 43.

MR. ALCOTT. How many know the meaning of the word *abstemious*?

(All held up hands.)

CHARLES. I once thought it meant not eating enough.

MR. ALCOTT. There is as much intemperance in not taking enough as in taking too much. Who think they take too little to eat, to drink — too little sleep — too little play?

(They only laughed in answer.)

NOTE 60, PAGE 44.

MR. ALCOTT. How could children turn the hearts of their fathers? How is that possible? Did any of you ever turn the hearts of your parents, by a kind look, a kind action?

CHARLES. I don't think people should say so.

MR. ALCOTT. I have heard of children who have done it; and I am sure I never look upon a baby, without thinking how much better I should probably become could my thoughts linger about it. Could every one have children, they would be better for it; I mean if they took care of them. Perhaps some of you make your parents better. They go out into the world and are tempted, and when they come home and see you, who are not tempted, it makes them better, perhaps.

CHARLES. I can see how little babies have that effect. Parents see that these little babies are perfectly happy because they are perfectly good, and they know they are not happy themselves, and they compare their own conduct with the innocence and purity of their children.

NOTE 61, PAGE 44.

MR. ALCOTT. Do any of you worship money?

(George B. and Nathan rose.)

GEORGE K. Was it not George B. who asked, (when Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers,) what became of the money?

GEORGE B. Yes. I had five cents in copper once, and father took out five cents in silver, and I preferred to take the silver.

MR. ALCOTT. It looked pretty. I have often known a boy change a rusty cent for a bright one. Imagination affects this subject, and if money were a disagreeable object to the senses, there would not be such a love of it.

FRANKLIN. I often go into a shop with an old fourpence-halfpenny, and exchange it for a bright five-cent piece.

NOTE 62, PAGE 44.

MR. ALCOTT. Would not that be Ideality rather than Idolatry?

(After some discussion of the words, Charles saw his mistake.)

NOTE 63, PAGE 45.

MR. ALCOTT. You see Frank persists in thinking Zacharias did not make himself dumb. Suppose you should eat too much, and have a fit of sickness in consequence, should you say God, or your doing wrong, made you sick? Would it not be a good plan when any thing happens to yourself to consider, whether there may not be some wrong in you which is the cause?

NOTE 64, PAGE 45.

MR. ALCOTT. Why does it?

CHARLES. Because Conscience is always with us.

NOTE 65, PAGE 46.

CHARLES. I don't see why Edward said *mere* Imagination.

MR. ALCOTT. He was thinking of Imagination in its common interpretation of Fancy. But Imagination is the state of mind that makes us see clearly. It is the Spirit co-working with Reason, with all the energy of the Soul.*

* Some conversation omitted here in the Record is restored by the Editor.

NOTE 66, PAGE 46.

MR. ALCOTT. Good mothers, spiritually minded mothers, are very happy, when they find a child is going to be given them.

CHARLES. I can't conceive that there can be any mothers who are not good ones.

MR. ALCOTT. There are some mothers who are not thankful for children. They think of the care and trouble these will give them.

CHARLES. I should think a child would always be a pleasure.

MR. ALCOTT. It is to those who understand it. Mothers know as soon as God intends to give them the child, and they retire as Elizabeth did, and

think of it a great deal ; they make clothes for it ; they think how it will look they often hope it may look like some one they love, and by having beautiful thoughts and feelings they often make it beautiful. But I knew a mother who used to say wicked things because her child was coming. When it was born, and she heard its voice, however, she could not resist it. Afterwards the child died, but she was a better woman ever after. Sometimes God sends bad people very beautiful children, that they may be attracted by the outward beauty to look deeper.

NOTE 67, PAGE 46.

(Here they all rose again, and said, And so it has been to-day.)

MR. ALCOIT. And what has been our subject ?

CHARLES. Birth.

MARTHA. Spirit preparing for birth.

CONVERSATION VI.

NOTE 68, PAGE 48.

(Here Mr. Alcott said that Socrates might be called a forerunner of Plato and Jesus. All good men prepare for the good that follows. They are bound together as a band of brothers, and shake hands across centuries.)

NOTE 69, PAGE 49.

(Here Andrew and George K. said, I don't think now as I did then.)

MR. ALCOTT. Now do you think God speaks in dreams?

MARTHA. I think the reason we do not have prophets and visions now is, that there is the Bible, and Jesus to teach us.

CHARLES. But every body cannot read the Bible.

MR. ALCOTT. And so you think there are prophets now.

NOTE 70, PAGE 50.

CHARLES. I do not like to think Jesus called himself Perfect, and said "be like me."

MR. ALCOTT. He never said so. He said, Be as God is — be Perfect as He is. He indeed said that they could not convict him of sin; but he did not mean that he possessed all that was in God; and William used the word perfect here, probably, in the sense of sinless.

NOTE 71, PAGE 50.

MR. ALCOTT. You suffer from evils that were done before you were born. Your diseases were caused not by your parents, perhaps, for they may be suffering from diseases received from others. You may be doing something now which may influence the health of others after you are dead. The evils of no kind of self-indulgence end with one's self. I have known families where

diseases have descended for generations. Blindness is apt to descend, and to appear every other generation.

NOTE 72, PAGE 51.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think she was favored more than every mother has been?

CHARLES. Yes; to have such a good child as Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think it came from herself that she was so favored?

MARTHA. She must be a good mother to have a good child.

FRANKLIN. Yes; because the evil goes from generation to generation.

MR. ALCOTT. Might all mothers be as much favored?

CHARLES. Yes; for all babies' spirits are perfectly good.

NOTE 73, PAGE 51.

(Mr. Alcott here repeated this question.)

CHARLES. Power over Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Such power as Napoleon's?

CHARLES. No; that was power over men's bodies. But Jesus had both.

MR. ALCOTT. Those who only aim at the material lose the spiritual. Those who aim at the spiritual attain both.

NOTE 74, PAGE 51.

MR. ALCOTT. How do you know that the spirit is eternal, immortal?

CHARLES. Because it is invisible and belongs to God.

MR. ALCOTT. From what does it take its immortality?

FRANKLIN. From good Spirit, from God.

MR. ALCOTT. And from the Human Spirit, which is ever living, and has its Life in itself.*

* Restored by the Editor.

NOTE 75, PAGE 52.

MR. ALCOTT. How should you think a mother would feel, when she knew she was to have a child?

CHARLES. I should think she would feel holy and happy.

CONVERSATION VII.

NOTE 76, PAGE 56.

(Here Mr. Alcott asked about the expressions of joy, and all the children told how they felt at meeting friends; and Charles said that we did not know what to do when we were joyful.)

MR. ALCOTT. We feel as if something was done to us. Where does joy come from?

CHARLES. From the heart.

MR. ALCOTT. How does it come into the heart?

CHARLES. From the Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. What is meant by the word *quicken*?

CHARLES. Enliven — you say “quicken ray.”

MR. ALCOTT. Yes, and we say, “the quick and the dead.” Jesus quickened men. Joy quickens the heart. When Mary’s salutation sounded on Elizabeth’s ear, she felt that the child promised was hers. It was quickened into being. This always takes place some time before a child is born.

NOTE 77, PAGE 56.

MR. ALCOTT. Were your mothers the mothers of God’s children?

CHARLES. I am not God’s son, but we all belong to him. I am naughty.

MR. ALCOTT. When you were born, I mean.

(Most of them rose, but Charles persisted he was not.)

SAMUEL R. I am not, now.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you never think of God as your Father? When you say the Lord’s prayer, and say “our Father,” do you not think of him as your Father?

CHARLES. Yes; I am my father's son, and Jesus was God's Son.

MR. ALCOTT. I know we have an earthly father; but did your earthly father make your soul?

CHARLES. No; God made my body and soul too, and gave me to my father and mother.

GEORGE K. Jesus was the only good Son.

MR. ALCOTT. Are all the bad sons the sons of earthly parents?

GEORGE K. All our goodness is the son of God, and the badness is not the son of God.

NOTE 78, PAGE 56.

MR. ALCOTT. What does blessedness mean?

ANDREW. To be good.

CHARLES. To have good done to you.

MR. ALCOTT. Through which part of us does God bless us?

ANDREW. Through our spirits.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you ever feel blessed?

ANDREW. No.

GEORGE and EMMA. Yes; when we have done right.

CHARLES. Yes; when I think of my parents, and the good house I have to live in, and my clothes, and the good school I go to.

MR. ALCOTT. These are blessings; but go farther inward — blessedness is within you.

CHARLES. I don't think that doing right blesses us. It is our duty to do right. My conscience never blessed me, but sometimes lets me receive blessings; but they come from God afterwards.

MR. ALCOTT. Is not God always ready to bless? Does not being blessed depend on you?

CHARLES. Perhaps it does; but the blessing is something else than being prepared for it.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you carry your heart into every thing?

CHARLES. I never knew any body but Jesus whose heart went into every thing.

MR. ALCOTT. Did you never feel repose, quiet, as if you were living in God?

CHARLES. No; because I am always wanting something.

MR. ALCOTT. But were your heart in what you did, you would feel this repose, this blessedness.

NOTE 79, PAGE 57.

MR. ALCOTT. If you want love, what must you do?

CHARLES. You must begin and love.*

NOTE 80, PAGE 58.

EMMA. It does not mean that you can magnify God himself, but every body, when they do right, makes God seem greater to themselves.

CHARLES. I think as our spirits are a part of God, when we do right we magnify God.

** Restored by the Editor.*

MR. ALCOTT. Love begets love, and is not a baby love made flesh and shaped to the eyes? Love forms babies.

Could bad passions make the soul of a baby?

CHARLES. Bad people have children.

MR. ALCOTT. But would not the children be better if their parents were better?

CHARLES. Yes; after they were born and could follow their example.

GEORGE K. I think that the baby's goodness has something to do with the goodness of the father and mother, and their badness makes its badness.

SAMUEL R. I don't think there are any bad babies.

MR. ALCOTT. No bad spirits; but if the spirits are surrounded with bodies diseased, do you think they have as good chance to be immediately good?

CHARLES. Oh no; I think the spirit will not have near so good a chance if it has a bad body.

MR. ALCOTT. Suppose you want to have a beautiful flower; you have the seed and you want to plant it; do you think nothing of the soil in which it is to grow? do you not fill your flower pot with the finest, freshest soil, and put it in the sun-shine?

CHARLES. Yes; and water it and tend it, and watch over it very carefully.

MR. ALCOTT. And do you not think it is equally important in what soil a soul is planted?

SEVERAL. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. The parents have much to do in regard to the body of a child. God helps, as he does about the rose seed. The Body is the Soil of the Soul.

NOTE 81, PAGE 58.

CHARLES. The Catholics call her Blessed Virgin all the time, so that is fulfilled.

MR. ALCOTT. Is your mother blessed?

CHARLES. No; not to have such a son.

MR. ALCOTT. I do not ask whether the son is worthy of her, but whether she is worthy to have a son.

CHARLES. She would not be very worthy, if she was not worthy to have me.

MR. ALCOTT. All mothers might be blessed.

NOTE 82, PAGE 59.

GEORGE. I should think she would have wanted to see her husband.

MR. ALCOTT. Have any of you more to say about this visit of Mary's?

(Some conversation ensued about her age, and it was observed that she probably was very young.)

CONVERSATION VIII.

NOTE 83, PAGE 62.

(Here Charles changed his picture, and supposed John dressed in a camel's hairy hide, with his tail for a belt.)

MR. ALCOTT. You make him quite a savage. Who was John the Baptist like?

CHARLES. Dr. Graham.

NOTE 84, PAGE 62.

MR. ALCOTT. Do any of you think your mothers had visions of you?

*(Several.)**

* Restored by the Editor.

NOTE 85, PAGE 63.

MR. ALCOTT. And now I don't want you to speak; but to hold up your hands, if you have ever heard any disagreeable or vulgar things about birth.

(None raised hands.)

Men have been brought before Courts of Justice for saying vulgar things about the birth of Christ; and all birth is sacred as Jesus Christ's. And I have heard of children saying very profane things about it; and have heard fathers and mothers do so. I hope that none of us will ever violate the sacredness of this subject.

NOTE 86, PAGE 63.

MR. ALCOTT. Edward B., it seems, had some profane notions of birth, connected with some physiological facts; but they were corrected here. Did you ever hear this line,

“The throe of suffering is the birth of bliss”?

GEORGE K. Yes; it means that Love, and Joy, and Faith, lead you to have suffering, which makes more happiness for you.

NOTE 87, PAGE 64.

(Here Mr. Alcott asked if every child was not a gift of God. They assented, and then there was some conversation upon names, and their own names were traced.)

NOTE 88, PAGE 65.

CHARLES. Why in a hill country more than any where else?

GEORGE K. Because they see more and have more imagination.

NATHAN. One can't have imagination in a city.

CHARLES. Some country fellows are very stupid.

MR. ALCOTT. That is true; but still the country affords advantages which the city does not. Should you not like to have more mountains and valleys and streams about Boston?

ANDREW. Yes; a great many more.

(Mr. Alcott spoke of the effect of the Ocean on himself, seen first, when he was twelve years old.)

NOTE 89, PAGE 65.

MR. ALCOTT. Does the Lord visit his people now?

CHARLES. Yes; in little babies.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; you have the thought. And a mother suffers when she has a child. When she is going to have a child, she gives up her body to God, and he works upon it, in a mysterious way, and with her aid, brings forth the Child's Spirit in a little Body of its own, and when it has come, she is blissful. But I have known some mothers who are so timid that they are not willing to bear the pain; they fight against God, and suffer much more.

CHARLES. I should think it ought to be the father, he is so much stronger.

MR. ALCOTT. He suffers because it is his part to see the suffering in order to relieve it. But it is thought, and with good reason, that if there were no wrong doing there would be no suffering attending this mysterious act. When Adam and Eve did wrong, it was said that Adam should earn bread by the sweat of his brow, and Eve have pain in bringing her children into the world. We never hear of trees groaning to put forth their leaves.

CHARLES. They have no power to do wrong.

MR. ALCOTT. True; God only gives them power to put forth, and they do it without pain. A rose has no pain in being born.

MR. ALCOTT. Every one is a visiter on the Earth from the Lord. I hope you will all be pleasant visiters. Some visiters are very unpleasant; they do not like what is given them to eat and drink; they do not like the beds they lie on. Do you think a drunkard is a pleasant visiter? Is he doing what he is sent to do?

(They all laughed.)

EMMA. I am not a very pleasant visiter, but I have a very pleasant visit.

NOTE 90, PAGE 65.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you are redeemed?

NATHAN. I am not quite, but almost.

NOTE 91, PAGE 65.

(Here Mr. Alcott repeated that to speak of God without having a holy feeling was profanity; but an oath in a Court of Justice was sacred. It was speaking of God seriously, with a holy feeling.)

NOTE 92, PAGE 66.

MR. ALCOTT. Tell me what the shadow of death means.

Would there be any shadow without light?

Which was made first, light or darkness?

CHARLES. Darkness. It seems to me that there was darkness first; I can't think otherwise.

MR. ALCOTT. Is darkness real, positive? I thought darkness was the shadow of light. What if the sun should be put out?

ANDREW. Then there would be darkness.

NATHAN. When there is darkness we would not know it if light had not been first.

MR. ALCOTT. Which of you think light came first? If light made the darkness, then if there had been no light there would have been no darkness. When the light goes out of this room does any thing come in?

CHARLES. Yes; darkness comes in.

MR. ALCOTT. Nothing comes in; and I cannot conceive of there not being light. Darkness is the absence of light to our external senses.

CONVERSATION IX.

NOTE 93, PAGE 68.

(Here Mr. Alcott asked if there was any thing to be said on Josiah's idea.)

NATHAN. I think Jesus was good at first, body and all, and he made the body better while he lived.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; I know that some of you thought that Jesus was so good that his body went to heaven.

GEORGE K. I don't think there was any naughtiness in him, or in any babies, but when they do wrong it comes, and they repent, and are born again.

MR. ALCOTT. Does Repentance make the body perfect again? Temperance would keep it good.*

** Restored by the Editor.*

MR. ALCOTT. I want to ask you about Josiah's idea, which is, that the body is made out of the naughtiness of other people.

ANDREW. I can't think that it takes the naughtiness away from other people, because it is all good at first.

MARIA. I think just as Andrew does.

CHARLES. I don't see what Josiah means.

SAMUEL R. I don't think bodies are either bad or good.

NATHAN. It don't take the bad away from other people, but gets bad itself.

MR. ALCOTT. What is birth?

CHARLES. Putting the spirit into a body; having the body put round the spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. But where is the body taken from?

CHARLES. I don't know.

GEORGE B. I think people get bad, and when they get bad they throw away their goodness, and God takes the goodness and makes it up into little babies.

NATHAN. God makes the body and does not put any goodness into it, and then the spirit comes and makes the body better.

MR. ALCOTT. I want all of you to account for the origin of the body. How is the body made, Charles, what does it come from?

NOTE 94, PAGE 68.

MR. ALCOTT. Suppose you knew all that happened before you were born, and all the interest God took in it, and all that the angels took in it; do you think you should have known any thing as wonderful as these things?

CHARLES. I don't think near so much would happen.

MR. ALCOTT. Who knows but the same wonders are going on in every case of birth, and that we are mistaken in supposing that this account of birth belonged to Jesus alone, rather than was an emblem of all birth?

EMMA. I think the outward facts were different, because he was born in a different place and under different circumstances; but there was no other difference.

NATHAN. I don't think they all felt the same when I was born as when Jesus Christ was, because I am not as good as Jesus was.

MR. ALCOTT. All may rise, who think with Emma, that some outward circumstances were different.

(All rose.)

CHARLES. I should think Mary would feel rather more, because she knew what a great son she was going to have.

MR. ALCOTT. Perhaps it was Mary's Idea that she was going to have a Saviour in her son; and her faith in the thought, that brought this message to her, made him what he was, or helped to do so, together with Joseph's constancy to her.

CHARLES. I don't know any better way to say, than the old way in the Bible, that it was made out of the dust.

MR. ALCOTT. Which is as much as to say you have no opinion at all of your own.

GEORGE K. It is a spirit coming into the body. God makes the body. The spirit always was. It was not made at that time. When you do wrong and repent, you are born again.

MR. ALCOTT. I will now tell you what I think. The spirit makes the body just as the rose throws out the rose leaves. I cannot tell you how the rose leaves come out of the rose. But I think the spirit throws the body out. The body is the outside of the spirit — the spirit made visible. I don't think God made my spirit and then my body, and brought them together, but I think that God makes my soul, and my soul all the time makes my body, just as something in the rose seed makes the rose leaves.

CHARLES. I don't think it is so, because it says, Joseph was going to put off Mary.

MR. ALCOTT. But he did not put her off.

CHARLES. Because an angel came to him in a dream.

MR. ALCOTT. And he trusted in the inward thought and feeling of his dream. Suppose your parents had thought, before you were born, that you were to be a Reformer, and had kept this thought unwaveringly uppermost, and their friends had sympathized with them in this, and all circumstances had been arranged in reference to it?

CHARLES. I do not think I should have been a Messiah.

NOTE 95, PAGE 68.

MR. ALCOTT. Frank is very decided; he tells what God ought to do; he thinks God does wrong, for he does not see the spiritual fact.

NOTE 96, PAGE 69.

(Here Mr. Alcott spoke of the Maternal Sense, and made it one with the Maternal Love that watches over infancy like a second Providence — God made visible to protect; and asked them if they felt differently towards their fathers and mothers. None thought they loved one better than the other; but some said they felt differently. Charles, and Nathan, and others, said they felt exactly alike about them.)

MR. ALCOTT. How do you know, Charles, which you are feeling about?

CHARLES. I know which I am thinking about. I feel about them exactly alike.

NOTE 97, PAGE 70.

GEORGE K. I don't think so much about dinner as I did then.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think Jesus thought about his dinner?

NATHAN. I don't think he cared about it much; he eat what was given to him.

NOTE 98, PAGE 70.

(Here Mr. Alcott repeated the question, and all expressed the Idea that the poor were happier than the rich — why?)

CHARLES. Because they have not so many chances, and anxieties, and do not have to think about so many bills.

GEORGE K. The poor are not tempted so much to do wrong.

EMMA. I think the rich can be as happy as the poor.

MR. ALCOTT. Those, who think neither riches nor poverty make happiness, may stand up.

(All rose.)

What does happiness depend on?

CHARLES. On the state of mind.

MR. ALCOTT. Name the state of mind.

SAMUEL R. Conscience must be at peace.

MR. ALCOTT. Happiness depends on the state of mind first, and secondly on the use we make of it. But should you go out in the street and ask people as you meet them, thus — Man! are riches essential to happiness? Certainly, he would say. Madam! are riches essential to happiness? Why, how can you ask such a question! Boy! do you think riches essential to happiness? Oh yes! — how could I have good dinners and rich clothes, without riches?

I am very glad that you, so early in life, have learnt the true view of this subject. And now I want each of you to ask yourselves this, — Are my father and mother spiritual persons — are they devoted to the culture of their own and other people's spirits, as much as they should be, or do they care more than I wish about outward things? I do not wish you to tell me.

NATHAN. I am sure I don't know.

(None of the rest answered.)

NOTE 99, PAGE 71.

(Here most of them confirmed the old idea.)

EMMA. Mr. Alcott, I always think of all angels looking like Jesus Christ.

NOTE 100, PAGE 71.

MR. ALCOTT. Is God with you?

MARTHA. I think "God with us" means that we have Spirit, and God is in our spirit.

ANDREW. God is in our Conscience.

MR. ALCOTT. Does God come to every Parent when the Baby comes?

(Most rose.)

How many of you have lost the God you brought with you? Do those that sit around me now, have as much of God in them as they would have had?

(No answer.)

Is God with us when we walk out and see the ocean, and mountains, and streams?

(All assented.)

God is with us even in our passion; we take his strength to destroy ourselves; we turn God round against himself.

NOTE 101, PAGE 72.

MARTHA. I think Jesus is Godlike.

CHARLES. I think he is God.

MR. ALCOTT. Who think Jesus is Godlike?

(All rose.)

Who think Jesus is God?

(Martha, Nathan, and George K. sat down.)

You, who are standing, think Jesus is Godlike and God also?

GEORGE K. I think he is *only* Godlike.

NOTE 102, PAGE 73.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the most striking fact that proves God is with us?

EMMA. God is with us, because he speaks to us through our Conscience.

NOTE 103, PAGE 73.

MR. ALCOTT. All may rise who think there is any sense in which the body is God.

(*No one rose.*)

All may rise who think there is no sense in which that can be said.

(*All rose.*)

I think there is a sense in which the body may be called God.

CHARLES. I wish you would explain how.

MR. ALCOTT. I cannot, because you cannot look through Physiology; and the language is liable to misconstruction. George spoke very well, when he called it God's work.

CONVERSATION X.

NOTE 104, PAGE 79.

(Here the children, who, during the above pictures had evinced the most lively pleasure, and occasionally had added circumstances to the various pictures, (George K., for instance, giving the shepherds a dog,) evinced the most lively disgust, and said, "no, no!" Some stopped their ears, and would not hear any more. Mr. Alcott said, You judge William too quickly; let me read the rest. But even after he had, they were not satisfied.)

GEORGE K. Let him have the rags if he wants them, but at least let them be clean.

NOTE 105, PAGE 82.

CHARLES. Envy is an inward fire.

NOTE 106, PAGE 82.

MR. ALCOTT. Now you may tell what Jesus came to save us from?

FRANCIS. From wickedness.

MR. ALCOTT. What kind of wickedness?

CHARLES. From anger.

NATHAN. From lying.

MR. ALCOTT. Why not from eating too much, drinking too much, getting angry?

ANDREW. Keeping us from cheating, swearing.

CHARLES. In one word, from punishment.

NOTE 107, PAGE 83.

MR. ALCOTT. Can any of you bring peace on earth and good will to men?

GEORGE K. Yes; by our example.

NOTE 108, PAGE 84.

MR. ALCOTT. Was there joy in heaven when you were born?

NATHAN. There was some, but not so much as when Jesus was born.

MR. ALCOTT. Who think birth is a time for joy in heaven and earth?

(All rose.)

It says, also, that there is joy in heaven when a sinner repents, and you say, George, that it is the new birth. Repentance makes us to be born over.

GEORGE K. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. What has been the subject, to-day?

ANDREW. Spirits taking on a body.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; the Soul's birth to the eyes. The eyes double our souls. The senses double our vision. They reveal the Soul's shape, as figured in a body of flesh.

CONVERSATION XI.

NOTE 109, PAGE 87.

(Here Mr. Alcott asked what they had to say on the rite of Christening; and asked what the baptism of a child meant to them. He then described the rite as administered in different churches.)

CHARLES. I should think it meant to purify; but the child is too young to be purified, unless it represents that it must continue pure.

NATHAN. It is to show there is purity in the child.

MR. ALCOTT. Water is the grand purifier of all outward things. If there was no water in the world, we should all decay and corrupt. What should you think would be the effect on parents of seeing their children sprinkled with water? Should you think there would be any good effect?

CHARLES. It shows the parents how to keep their children pure.

MR. ALCOTT. In some churches the parents promise to bring up the child in a Christian way. And when there are no parents, there are other persons who promise, which are called god-parents. In some churches there is no Christening of children, but grown people only are baptized by being plunged into the water by the minister.

CHARLES. Yes; I once saw twenty-five people immersed at the same time.

MR. ALCOTT. Water purifies the body, and is an emblem of the Soul's being purified from inordinate appetites and passions.

NOTE 110, PAGE 90.

MR. ALCOTT. How many think impatience a sin now?
(Almost all.)

Who of you are frequently guilty of that sin ?

(All rose but one.)

How many think that if you could master impatience, you could master all other sins ?

(All but George B.)

Does not almost all sin begin in impatience ? impatience leads to worrying, to anger, and anger to hard words, and hard words to blows.

GEORGE K. Yes ; but it would not master appetite.

MR. ALCOTT. Is there not a good deal of impatience in the appetites, when they want their dinner ? What is the opposite of impatience ?

CHARLES. Patience is the opposite of impatience.

MR. ALCOTT. Who think Jesus Christ was patient always ?

(All held up hands.)

What word means a state of mind above all trouble ?

CHARLES. Patience.

MR. ALCOTT. Including patience — God has it. Only think of God getting in a passion !

NATHAN. God would not be God if he was in a passion.

MR. ALCOTT. Are you like God when you do ?

FRANCIS. Not the least like God.

MR. ALCOTT. I must tell you the word I mean, — Repose. People that have repose are less troubled about outward things. They look down on the world as God does. The greatest Souls are full of repose.

NOTE 111, PAGE 90.

CHARLES. I have changed my opinion now.

NOTE 112, PAGE 90.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you labor to keep your patience, to take things kindly ?

FRANCIS. I do some.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you have improved in bearing disagreeable things, have tempers better than they were several years ago ?

(Most stood up.)

NOTE 113, PAGE 91.

SAMUEL R. Jesus meant to teach us not to mind the body's pain.

CHARLES. It is of small consequence, when the body is hurt to make the spirit better.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you suppose that he was conscious at this time, and intended to set an example?

(All.)

And you think, Charles, that pain is of no consequence, if it makes us better. People who suffer the most are often the best. People who suffer least do not know much. Can you name any suffering that has made you better?

CHARLES. When I have been punished and my body has been hurt, as when you punish me on the hand. But when I punish you I feel worse, because I know that you have done nothing wrong, and I have nothing to feel angry about, as you have all the bodily part, and I had rather be punished some other way any time.

MR. ALCOTT. As many of the rest of you, as have felt a great deal more when they have punished me, than when punished themselves, may rise.

(All who had been so punished rose.)

When one person gives himself up to be punished by another, what do you call it?

SEVERAL. Self-sacrifice.

MR. ALCOTT. And perhaps circumcision is an emblem of self-sacrifice.

NOTE 114, PAGE 91.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the Holy Ghost?

NATHAN. I don't think it ought to be called God's Ghost, but Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. How does the Holy Spirit work?

NATHAN. In our body.

MR. ALCOTT. How does it get into the body?

NATHAN. Through our mind.

CHARLES. It means good spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Have any of you ever felt the Holy Ghost influencing you, and when?

NATHAN. When I obey my father and mother.

MR. ALCOTT. In what does it act?

GEORGE K. In Conscience.

NATHAN. In all our faculties.

CHARLES. Conscience told Simeon it was Jesus.

MR. ALCOTT. I asked if any of you had felt the influence of the Holy Spirit.

FRANK. Yes.

(Others held up hands.)

MR. ALCOTT. Now I want to know whether you have been ever conscious of something working in you which you think was the Holy Spirit.

FRANKLIN. I did once.

MR. ALCOTT. I should like an instance. If you have ever felt something which illuminates, enlightens, presses you on — something you cannot resist — when every thing was clearer — when it seemed as if now the whole truth was found. It did not seem yourself.

(No one gave an instance.)

What is the best name for this feeling, this illumination?

CHARLES. Is it the supernatural?

MR. ALCOTT. The supernatural is in it.

CHARLES. Is it Revelation?

MR. ALCOTT. Revelation is in it.

NATHAN. Is it belief?

MR. ALCOTT. Belief is only in the head.

CHARLES. Religion.

MR. ALCOTT. Did you ever hear the word Inspiration? Inspire means to breathe in. God acts from the other side in inspiring you. A great many people go outward to find God.

NATHAN. God inspires by outward things.

MR. ALCOTT. In looking at the Beautiful, without, we see signs of the inward, and God inspires us.

NOTE 115, PAGE 91.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think that those who looked on the sufferings of Jesus found out what was in themselves?

(No answer.)

What did Simeon mean by the sword?

CHARLES. To see Jesus so much hurt pierced Mary.

MR. ALCOTT. How does a mother feel when her child is hurt? Think of your mothers.

CHARLES. Once I was very much hurt, and my mother never likes to see the scar, it makes her feel so.

MR. ALCOTT. The Maternal Sentiment.

CONVERSATION XII.

NOTE 116, PAGE 94.

NATHAN. I thought the star was John's spirit before it was born.

NOTE 117, PAGE 96.

MR. ALCOTT. Why did I check Josiah?

FRANCIS. Because there was not time.

CHARLES. Because he was going into outward things so much.

NOTE 118, PAGE 98.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you feel that the wrong things you do come into your dreams and punish you? Such may rise.

(Some rose.)

Such of you as have been rewarded in your sleep may rise.

(Some.)

How were you rewarded?

SOME. I thought of pleasures to come.

MR. ALCOTT. What sort of pleasures, — outward? Are good people rewarded by outward pleasures?

SEVERAL. No.

MR. ALCOTT. What is one of the inward rewards? Is a mother's love inward? And do you dream of her smiling face when you do right?

ONE. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. We may dream fancy things, but I am not talking of these all this while, but of conscience dreams; conscience dreams are worth something; sense dreams, nothing.

NOTE 119, PAGE 99.

MR. ALCOTT. Why should this star be in the East?

CHARLES. Because there the sun rises.

MR. ALCOTT. Why does the sun rise in the East.

(No answer.)

What is sun rising an emblem of?

(After a while he added,)

What is that act called, which brings forth the Spirit to the eyes?

CHARLES. Birth.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the spirit born from?

CHARLES. From Spirit, from God.

MR. ALCOTT. Then is not the East the emblem of God? and where should Wise Men come from, if not from the East? Wisdom comes from the birth-place of light and life. The star was an emblem of Holiness. Some of the light came down and stood over the place where the child was. Is not the Soul a spiritual star which glitters out at the eyes?

NOTE 120, PAGE 100.

MR. ALCOTT. Can you find out any thing by the shape of the head?

SAMUEL R. I think we can somewhat.

CHARLES. I don't think it can be trusted.

MR. ALCOTT. When you see a man with a low forehead, what do you think about him before you hear him speak?

CHARLES. I judge more by the face.

MR. ALCOTT. I think there is more to be learnt by the face.

SAMUEL R. Phrenologists often come pretty near.

CHARLES. They only guess.

MR. ALCOTT. It is a beautiful system of guess work, at least. But what is Nature the phrenology of?

NATHAN. The Phrenology of Spirit.

CHARLES. I don't see why you should call it Phrenology.

MR. ALCOTT. Its objects are signs of mind.

CHARLES. I think you can judge best of men by what they say, if they speak the truth.

EMMA. I think we can judge by actions best.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; words are deceptive signs; and actions sometimes tell lies.

NOTE 121, PAGE 102.

MR. ALCOTT. Are there any Child-Worshippers now — any Wise Men now that worship children?

EMMA. I think they worship what is spiritual and Godlike in in them.

MR. ALCOTT. In all children as in Jesus?

EMMA. Yes; except that they do not give gifts. They worship by feeling.

MR. ALCOTT. We should have the same feeling when we see a pure child as when we feel God within us. What if every body worshipped children, would it not be a different world from what it is now? How would it be?

CHARLES. Why they would worship little babies.

EMMA. It would be different from what it is now.

MR. ALCOTT. And if they began worshipping little babies, and went on worshipping, and, bye and bye, the babies joined in, what would be worshipped?

SOME. Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. If we do not worship our babies, whom we have seen, how shall we worship God whom we have not seen? Have any of you been worshipped?

FRANCIS. Only by our mothers.

NOTE 122, PAGE 102.

MR. ALCOTT. Did you ever see that face spoiled?

(Some assented.)

How long does it take to spoil a face?

CHARLES. About a year.

MR. ALCOTT. How many keep their spiritual faces?

CHARLES. Why, I never saw more than twelve babies, and I cannot say; but it takes a good while to get the good out of them, by letting them eat and drink too much.

MR. ALCOTT. And then what changes take place?

FRANCIS. They begin to look dull.

MR. ALCOTT. And the brow comes down, and the head grows out back, instead of growing high towards heaven, and the hands begin to scratch, and there is quarrelling.

CHARLES. Mr. Alcott, I think if people would only wash their children's faces! When I was coming to school I saw a little child, whose face seemed to be struggling with the dirt, as if it did not know what to do.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; and don't you think it felt there was something wrong? What's the matter? it seemed to say — why can't I do as I used to do? why am I not free? How many of your faces are what they ought to be? How many have too much behind — their faculties are doing faculties, not thinking faculties — like a ship without any steerer.

CHARLES. There's Phrenology again!

NOTE 123, PAGE 103.

(Here Mr. Alcott asked some more questions of the same kind, and when the children acknowledged the Souls in their brothers and sisters, asked them if they ever struck them, or looked cross, and which they thought most of, their Souls or Bodies.)

CONVERSATION XIII.

NOTE 124, PAGE 104.

(Here Mr. Alcott asked, how many of them thought that by studying the stars they would learn their own fate. He described casting horoscopes, and said some people still believed in astrology, yet now people studied their babies' horoscopes in their own characters.)

NOTE 125, PAGE 104.

MR. ALCOTT. What was the other kind of wisdom?

MARTHA. Spiritual.

MR. ALCOTT. Which world do you study for that kind of wisdom?

FRANCIS. The inward world.

EMMA. Because the inward world includes the outward.

MR. ALCOTT. Which makes us wisest?

FRANCIS. The spiritual.

CHARLES. Both.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; both are desirable.

NOTE 126, PAGE 109.

MR. ALCOTT. What was the feeling that filled Herod? Have you any feeling within you, which, carried out, would lead to such an act?

GEORGE K. Anger.

CHARLES. Revenge — madness.

MR. ALCOTT. Not the madness of insanity.

ANDREW. Passion.

HERBERT. Envy.

MARTHA. Hatred.

EMMA. Cruelty.

MR. ALCOTT. Was Herod worse than you, when he was born?

(None thought so.)

NOTE 127, PAGE 109.

MR. ALCOTT. The stars might have influenced his imagination. Superstition makes people cruel. He feared that he should lose his throne.

CHARLES. Why did the soldiers obey him?

MR. ALCOTT. He was a despot. To disobey him would have been instant death.

GEORGE K. I should rather have died than to have done such a thing.

MR. ALCOTT. Could you expect much moral courage from them?

CHARLES. I should rather they would have destroyed men and women.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; and soldiers rarely do hurt children. Sometimes they have done so; but the roughest soldier usually respects a mother's feelings.

NOTE 128, PAGE 110.

MR. ALCOTT. Have any of you felt pleasure in seeing others punished when they have troubled you?

CHARLES. I don't—because I think that if I had not been here, they would not be punished.

MR. ALCOTT. Why do you tell me of the faults of others?

CHARLES. Because I don't want them to do so to me or to any body else.

(Mr. Alcott cross-questioned Charles, and he said that he took no pleasure at all in seeing others punished; that as far as they were hurt, he was sorry; that however angry he might be, a boy's being punished took all his anger away.)

SAMUEL R. I sometimes think they deserve it; but I take no pleasure in their punishment.

EMMA. No.

MARTHA. I sometimes do, when they have plagued me.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think Herod had this feeling?

SEVERAL. He did not think those babies deserved punishment.

MR. ALCOTT. No; it was selfish love of power. I think Josiah's reason was, that the dramatic effect took his eye. And that is, I suppose, the reason why people go to hangings. They feel sorry for the man, but they want to see how it is. When I was sixteen years old I walked sixteen miles with Dr. Alcott* to see a man hanged; and when he was thrown off I fainted away. I had no pleasure in it. — And again, at another time I went to a Prison, and saw the prisoners come up a ladder from below, where they were obliged to sleep. They came up at the point of the bayonet, and were chained and put to their work.

EMMA. I should not want to go to such a place.

MR. ALCOTT. No; I did not get over it for some time. I had no idea of what I was going to see.

* Editor of the Moral Reformer; House that I Live in; The Young Mother; and other popular books.

CONVERSATION XIV.

NOTE 129, PAGE 111.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you think Jesus used to do when a boy?

(Most of them expressed a difficulty in conceiving him a boy — except when talking in the Temple.)

CHARLES. I think of him in his father's carpenter's shop making crosses and tombs and such things. And I think he would try to carve out God.

RECORDER. That is the last thing, Charles, that a Jew would think of carving, as it broke the first commandment.

MR. ALCOTT. But you mean, Charles, that he would strive to express an Idea by it. Yes; it is plain Jesus had something of an Artist's mind; else his language had not been so picturesque. He was in Egypt among splendid works of art in his childhood, which perhaps helped out his imagination. Who do you think taught him to read?

FRANKLIN. He taught himself.

MARTHA. I never thought he learnt any thing from books.

EMMA. I think his mother helped him learn.

NOTE 130, PAGE 113.

MR. ALCOTT. What is God's business?

GEORGE K. To do what he wants us — act out.

MARTHA. To set good examples.

CHARLES. Keeping free from doing wrong; and not giving up to temptation.

MR. ALCOTT. Such of you as think that you have not always been about your father's business may stand up.

(All rose.)

NOTE 131, PAGE 115.

MR. ALCOTT. Now I want to know how it was that Jesus knew so much more than others, when he was twelve years old.

FRANCIS. Because he was a great deal better.

GEORGE K. Because he used his faculties more.

MR. ALCOTT. Suppose you had used your nature, and listened as Jesus did, like good sons. Josiah thinks God made Jesus think — George seems to think we must live up to Inspiration, or it will not come down to us.

MR. ALCOTT. Why are you not Christs?

FRANKLIN. Because we are not good enough.

MR. ALCOTT. Might you not have been?

(They assented.)

Might you not have been talking on spiritual subjects now, so as to astonish people as Jesus did the doctors, if you had been faithful to what was in you?

(They assented.)

NOTE 132, PAGE 115.

MR. ALCOTT. Does God help you as much as he did Jesus.

CHARLES. I think he helps us in proportion — as much as we deserve.

MR. ALCOTT. He offers just as much, but you do not take it. All that think that if you did all you could, God would help you as he did Jesus, may rise.

(Most rose.)

What makes the difference? Is it not a choice of the Will?

NOTE 133, PAGE 117.

(Here Mr. Alcott asked for more emblems of growth.)

CHARLES. A butterfly coming out of the chrysalis.

GEORGE K. A painter makes a picture and brings out more and more of what he means.

FRANCIS. A rose coming out of the bud.

MARTHA. Leaves coming out of a tree.

CHARLES. I have seen a picture of a rose, in which there was a little angel; and I can think first of the bud, then the flower, then the angel coming out and flying round.

NOTE 134, PAGE 117.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you suppose it possible for children to make remarks which would make their parents better?

FRANCIS. I don't see why they should not.

MR. ALCOTT. Suppose a child is well instructed in spiritual things, and converses on these with his parents, and makes them understand better than they did before, though they had learned these before.

(One asked, how could that be?)

Because the child understands his own nature; which gives him the meaning of all words and all instruction.

NOTE 135, PAGE 118.

(Here Mr. Alcott said, Perhaps he was not aware that he knew more than they did. He inquired, and listened to what they said, and then answered what was in his mind simply. The children here that listen best, answer best, and some answers given here have surprised people, and they have wondered how young children should understand such things.)

EMMA. I don't think we know much.

MR. ALCOTT. No; and self-knowledge is not likely to make people vain; but knowledge of rocks and shells and such outward things often does.

EMMA. I heard that a person said, that he should think we would know too much to say such things as we do.

MR. ALCOTT. I suppose he did not understand what you meant by the things you said.

NOTE 136, PAGE 118.

MR. ALCOTT. Did Jesus go there to teach or to be taught? I have often been taught by what very small children have said; and astonished at their answers. I think Jesus went there to be taught; but his very questions taught them. Has truth any age? Is it not always the same in young and old? Is it not immortal? Truth is old.

CHARLES. Yes; because it always was.

MR. ALCOTT. And Truth is young; it is perpetually renewing itself. All wisdom is not in grown up people.

NOTE 137, PAGE 120.

MR. ALCOTT. Children are often about their father's business and parents are so much interested in their own, that they do not know it. Suppose a child is reading a book which interests its mind very much, and its mother calls it off and says, go and buy me a glass of gin, would that be calling him to or from his father's business? And when fathers keep their children at work and give them no education, yet all the time they can obtain, the children devote to their own improvement—is not that “the Father's” business? Very often children are absorbed in what interests them, and their parents reprove them, and yet they may be about their “Father's business.” When a little infant is playing, is it not about its “Father's business?” and you should not roughly interrupt it. Now let me ask you one question more—Do you think your parents sympathize with you as much as you would like to have them?

(All rose.)

Do you think Mr. Alcott does?

CHARLES. Not so much as my father and mother; but a great deal.

(The rest raised hands in assent.)

CONVERSATION XV.

NOTE 138, PAGE 121.

MR. ALCOTT. Tell me what you now think.

ANDREW. I think he was doing good to people, making them better.

MR. ALCOTT. Was he running of errands for his mother, and helping his father and mother?

FRANCIS. No indeed.

EMMA. I think he was doing things of that kind.

CHARLES. I think that all the time he had, he devoted to reading, especially the Bible, and all the money he had he saved in order to buy good books, which he read.

MR. ALCOTT. You think he cultivated his mind. Do you think he studied Nature?

MARTHA. Yes; he went into the Creation, and heard the birds sing, and saw the flowers, and the streams.

MR. ALCOTT. You do not think then that his eye was dull. Did he grow over Nature, or did Nature grow over him?

CHARLES and OTHERS. He grew over Nature.

MR. ALCOTT. Have you ever imagined what kind of a person the father of Jesus was?

FRANCIS. I think he had a long beard, and was rather old.

CHARLES. I think he was a plain man, and went to church, and was very decided in his manner about things; not but that he was perfectly kind, but he would set his foot down, and say things should be so and so.

ANDREW. I think he looked like the bust of Plato. (*Pointing to the corner of the room.*)

MR. ALCOTT. How does Mary represent herself to you?

MARTHA. I think she was young, and her hair fell over her neck.

EMMA. I think she was very beautiful.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you mean inward or outward beauty ?

EMMA. Both.

CHARLES. I think she was an angel before she was a woman. It seems to me, as if she must have been.

ANDREW. I think she looked like an angel, and like a woman too.

SAMUEL R. I thought she was very beautiful.

CHARLES. I thought she had a great deal of maternal feeling, and that made her beautiful; and that she looked like the Circassian women, very simple, and when not engaged in cleaning up her house, Jesus was sitting by, reading to her. Her eyes were dark blue.

FRANK. I think they were light blue.

CHARLES. And her hair was black.

EMMA. I thought it was brown.

MR. ALCOTT. I always have imagined her of light complexion, with delicate features, full blue eyes and light hair; and that the Son resembled the Mother.

CHARLES. I think of Jesus reading to her, and when he could not pronounce a word his mother would take a needle and point out the letters, and show him how the word was spelt.

MR. ALCOTT. Well! I never thought of Jesus as learning to read, but as a quiet, meditative Child, who observed his own Nature, and Creation.

EMMA. When he was not engaged for his parents, I think his usual occupation was to go out into the woods to walk.

MARTHA. Sometimes I think he had a book in his walks.

CHARLES. I think he had a garden, and every day he went into it and gathered flowers for his mother.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; I have seen a very beautiful picture of Jesus in his childhood, with flowers in his hands. He liked to be influenced by Nature; he was imaginative; he had a magnificent imagination; he was poetical; he seemed to have every thing in his mind; it was a perfect mind—good Sense, just Judgment, entire Faith. He grew up like a tree in the midst of Nature. The scenery around Nazareth was very impressive. Nazareth was not a city, but a town.

EMMA. I think if I could draw, I could show exactly how the house looked in which he lived, I seem to see it so clearly.

MR. ALCOTT. I suppose there was a great deal of repose around it; no harsh noises; and Jesus was generally alone; he could not find many companions who could understand him; and he would walk in the woods.

NATHAN. I should think there would be tigers in the woods.

CHARLES. He was not afraid of any tigers.

MR. ALCOTT. No; Simplicity is never afraid.

NOTE 139, PAGE 122.

MR. ALCOTT. What word expresses yielding to instruction easily? It is a beautiful word.

EMMA. Submissive.

MR. ALCOTT. There is submission in it.

GEORGE B. Obedience.

MR. ALCOTT. It leads to obedience. I must tell you the word; it is docility.

CHARLES. I thought that word applied to animals.

MR. ALCOTT. Animals have it, but it may be applied to men. Andrew is docile; Emma is docile; Charles disputes; he has a sturdy will; he does not like to bend. The opposite of docility is obstinacy; the excess of docility is weakness. Jesus was docile, asking and receiving, ready to be taught. Who among you are docile?

(Some.)

The opposite of docility is frowardness also.

NOTE 140, PAGE 123.

(Here Mr. Alcott repeated these questions, and asked if they felt as ready to obey as was best, and as they wished to.)

CHARLES. Towards my parents I feel willing; I don't know as I do towards others.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think you are docile?

CHARLES. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. I do not. I must differ from you in this. I think you lack docility. I am not aware that any of you have ever acknowledged that you avoided doing wrong from the fear of punishment.

NATHAN. Josiah has.

MR. ALCOTT. How is it now?

EMMA. I have been influenced by it sometimes.

(Several others acknowledged.)

MR. ALCOTT. I think I was influenced by the fear of punishment when I was a boy; and I want you all to think if you do not sometimes think among other motives for obedience, that if you do wrong you may have a clap on the hand, or be punished some other way.

CHARLES. I am not afraid of being clapped on the hand.

MR. ALCOTT. I am not sure that you are not sometimes influenced by the thought of that among other things.

CHARLES. I am not!

MR. ALCOTT. I hope you will not get excited on this subject, Charles. You mean that you can bear it, and you do bear it very well; but I think it is not agreeable to you.

CHARLES. No; not agreeable; but I am not kept from wrong by fear of it.

EMMA. When I do wrong I never think of doing it till I have done it, and then I know it.

MR. ALCOTT. You do not premeditate evil. How many of you premeditate doing wrong?

(Several rose; Emma also.)

You think something may be done, which you know is wrong, yet you do it.

NATHAN. I am not kept from doing it by being clapped on the hand.

CHARLES. Nor I.

NOTE 141, PAGE 123.

HALES. I remember that time, and I remember the very day before that he struck his sister.

NATHAN. Hales never went into my house.

HALES. But I saw that!

MR. ALCOTT. Did you know, at the time, that you had done wrong within six months?

NATHAN. I suppose I had felt bad.

(He did not acknowledge any more.)

MR. ALCOTT. Nathan and Charles may sometimes be put in the same category of opposites.

NOTE 142, PAGE 124.

MR. ALCOTT. Did his mind do such things as his parents wished ; did he, with his ready love, foresee their desires ?

(They assented.)

And do you know what is going on in your mother's mind ? Do you enter into her views, and ideas, and feelings so as to accommodate your conduct to her wishes ? The reason there is so little obedience is, that mothers do not know what is in the children's minds, and the children do not know what is in the mothers' minds.

FRANCIS. I think my mother knows what is going on in my mind pretty often ; but I do not know what is going on in hers, except sometimes.

MR. ALCOTT. Love gives one a knowledge of the inmost nature of another. Such as love know most of those they love. There is a saying which has a great deal of truth in it, — " Love and do what you will ;" but hate, and you must be restrained, or you will do nothing but what is wrong.

NOTE 143, PAGE 124.

MR. ALCOTT. What is your opinion at present ; do you think there are some children superior to their parents ?

(Several held up hands.)

CHARLES. I think every little baby is holier than its father and mother.

MR. ALCOTT. But suppose the father and mother had not lost their babyhood. How many of you think you have lost your holiness ?

(All rose.)

I know children who get so used to scratch one another's faces, that they do not mind it in the least. They have lost their sensibility ; but at first it is not so.

MARTHA. I know a little child that always cries when her brother is hurt.

RECORDER. Josiah has a little brother that not only cries when some one is hurt, but whenever any thing is broken.

EMMA. My sister is rather careless, and when she breaks any thing she is very sorry.

FRANCIS. My brother likes to tread on worms.

MR. ALCOTT. And you know that one boy in this school confessed, that at first he did not like to put worms on a hook, but afterwards he made such a beast of himself that he did not care. This is cruelty; but tenderness does not like to see pain or to give it. It feels there is something holy where there is life. It respects life, even in a bug. We do not know but Herod began his cruelty in being cruel to insects.

NOTE 144, PAGE 125.

MR. ALCOTT. Could you keep yourself from hating?

SEVERAL. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. But can you live without loving?

CHARLES. You may have bad things, but you must love.

MR. ALCOTT. Then does love seem to be a part of your nature; something you cannot get rid of?

CHARLES. If it was not a part of you, you could keep from loving.

FRANKLIN. But you must love either good things or bad things.

NATHAN. You can keep from loving bad things.

MR. ALCOTT. You can keep down your appetites, not your love entirely. If you love good things you are virtuous.

NOTE 145, PAGE 125.

MR. ALCOTT. Was God ever tempted?

NATHAN. No; he would not be God if he was.

CHARLES. I should think he would sometimes be tempted to punish us more than he does.

MR. ALCOTT. Does he not always inflict the just punishment, but we do not understand it?

EMMA. He punishes us just right; not too much nor too little.

NATHAN. He does not punish us at all; he only makes us think we are punished.

MR. ALCOTT. Is not that real punishment?

NATHAN. It is not outward.

MR. ALCOTT. If you eat too much, and break out in sores on your body, is not that outward?

NATHAN. The sores are outward, but the cause is inward; we do not see that.

MR. ALCOTT. True; you cannot see the cause which is the wrong, but you can see the effect which is the punishment. When a drunkard walks the street, we can see his sad face; it is his punishment. And the miser is disliked and shunned, because he loves gold better than his fellow creatures. Then he is constantly afraid of losing it. Is he not punished by his gold? I know a man — I used to play with him when we were both boys, and he never did me any good — who seems to be without love for human beings. He will not go and live with his father, because he is afraid his father will get away some of the money he expects to have; and once he had a little brother born; it was after he was old enough to have thought about having his father's farm, and he was so angry because he thought this little brother would have some of the farm, that he would not stay at home, but went and lived away.

But we were speaking of temptation. Temptation proves your goodness. It does not give goodness to you. If you yield to temptation once, you are more liable to yield to it again. Yielding to temptation forms the power of habit.

NOTE 146, PAGE 125.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you see any distinction between holiness and virtue?

SOME. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. What is virtue?

CHARLES. It is acting.

MR. ALCOTT. Virtue comes by the trial of our holiness. It is holiness brought out and represented.

CHARLES. Can we be virtuous unless we are holy?

MR. ALCOTT. Virtue is the sign of holiness; it is holiness drawn out.

NOTE 147, PAGE 126.

MR. ALCOTT. Now I should like to know what you came into the world for — what is your mission on earth?

SAMUEL R. To do good and be good.

CHARLES. To teach other people to be good.

EMMA. To keep our holiness.

MARTHA. God wanted to try how we could bear temptation.

FRANCIS. So I think.

NATHAN. To keep our spirits clear.

MR. ALCOTT. Did you come into the world on the same errand that Jesus did?

(*No.*)

Did you come on a similar errand? How did it happen that one boy was sent on a greater errand than another?

NATHAN. Jesus came to keep the world good; the others came to help him.

MR. ALCOTT. Such of you as think that your souls came into your bodies to do what Jesus did, may rise.

(*Most rose.*)

EMMA. Different things, but of the same kind.

MR. ALCOTT. How many of you have begun to feel this, and also an interest in the goodness of every child you meet in the street?

(*Emma rose.*)

Could any of you give up any thing you liked for the sake of making others better and happier?

FRANCIS. I could.

CHARLES. I want to get myself good first.

EMMA. Some people never do themselves or any body else any good.

MR. ALCOTT. And so you, Charles, are engaged all the time in getting yourself good!

CHARLES. Not all the time.

MR. ALCOTT. I should say that the great end for which we came into the world, was to grow — to unfold the spiritual nature — spiritual growth. Perhaps none of you have yet felt what your great end is. I think I was thirteen years old when I began to think about my mission.

EMMA. I did not begin very early.

MR. ALCOTT. You have thought how you could use your faculties, however. Has any other one thought about it much?

FRANCIS. I have thought about it some.

CHARLES. I think I shall use my Soul in selling oil.

MR. ALCOTT. And in doing that, you may do a great deal of good. The humblest life may be a bright one. A beggar may be a glorious creature ; and so may a rich man.

GEORGE B. I shall be a merchant.

MR. ALCOTT. Do you think you shall do a great deal of good, by being a merchant?

GEORGE B. I never thought about that.

MR. ALCOTT. When I was young, I first cultivated land. Then I went about the world several years. At last I thought my mind was best fitted for teaching, and here I now am, teaching in this Temple, and I hope I shall do good to many children, as well as parents, before I go to my FATHER.

END OF VOL. I.

THE LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 039475303